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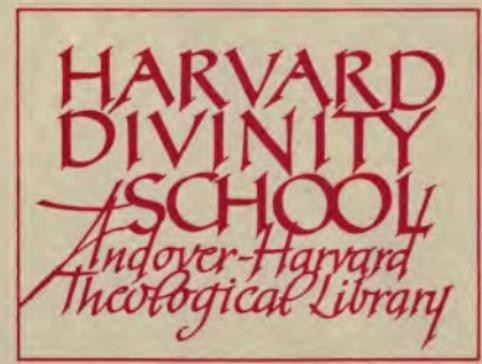
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H E L P S
TO
DEVOUT LIVING.

CONSISTING OF
SELECTIONS FROM BIBLICAL AND
VARIOUS RELIGIOUS WRITERS
OF ALL AGES.

COMPILED BY
MISS J. DEWEY.

NEW BEDFORD:
PUBLISHED BY THE COMPILER.
1879.

E. Anthony & Sons, Printers, New Bedford.

PREFACE.

I think that there is no religious denomination, the members of which are considerable, that has not felt the need of some kind of guidance for religious thought, and some assistance towards putting into a becoming form the petitions and acknowledgments addressed to the Supreme Being. The Psalms of the Hebrew Scriptures are themselves compositions of this character,—acts of praise or supplication, or expressions of humility and dependence upon the Source of all Good. There is no religious work, properly so called,—for I leave polemics entirely out of the question,—which does not, when read in a proper temper, awaken a desire to reach a higher standard of virtue, a more complete abnegation of self, a warmer love for our fellow creatures,—in short, a nearer resemblance in character to the founder of the Christian religion. That desire is of itself a silent prayer, to which a manual like this is intended to give a clear and distinct expression, suitable to the imperfections of our nature and to the distance at which we stand from that pattern of excellence.

That compilations not unlike this have been already made, some of which are of great excellence, is true; but this, as appears to me, does not imply that there is no room for a new one, when we consider that the materials of which it is to be composed increase with every year. As long as the human mind occupies itself with those important subjects, its relations to God and the relations of men to each other under his government,—books on religious subjects will be produced and published, and some of them will, of course, be the work of minds finely endowed by nature and cultivated and invigorated by study and reflection. These writings, whether they are of the hortatory or meditative class, whether they take the form of prayer or precept, or that of hymns expressive of some religious emotion or religious truth, supply ample mat-

ter to be incorporated into a selection which shall form a daily companion for the devotions of the closet or the family, and which, by referring to the authors, remind us of the sympathies by which we are connected with all those of our generation who hold to the Christian faith. Distant as they may be from us in space, we bring them into communion with ourselves by adopting their words. It is hardly extravagant to say that, in this manner, they become sharers in our devotions, and impart to the most solitary of them somewhat of a social character.

To the devotional poetry of our language very considerable additions have, of late years, been made, and thus the compiler of a work like this has the opportunity of making a more diversified choice than was possible at any time in the past. Devotion is no exception to those emotions which love to express themselves in verse. When, to words aptly chosen, is added the charm of measure and rhyme, and these are wedded to musical modulation, the highest and most moving expression of devotional feeling is attained. Wordsworth, in one of his prefaces, referring, I think, to Pope's Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard, remarks that by the power of verse Pope has contrived to render the plainest common sense interesting, and frequently to invest it with the appearance of passion. It is thus with devotional poetry,—the want of novelty in the thought is often compensated for by the melody of the versification, which lifts it out of the level of commonplace and deepens the impression made by it on the mind.

What Dr. Johnson said of devotional poetry,—that it is always unsatisfactory, and that no man has written it well,—has often been refuted by example since his time. In fact, it was sufficiently refuted before in the sacred songs of the Hebrews, and in the grand hymn which Milton puts into the mouths of our first parents while yet in paradise, as they stood at the door of their bower in the glory of the morning. I might instance also, as a proof of its fallacy, the magnificent hymn with which Thomson closes his poem of the Seasons, magnificent in spite of its blemishes. The “Hymn before

sunrise, in the Valley of Chamouny," by Coleridge, one of the noblest poems in our language, or any other, needs only to be mentioned in order to show how great was Johnson's mistake. A great number of shorter poems designed to be sung in religious assemblies, of such decided merit as to show the perfect compatibility of poetry and worship, have been written since Johnson's time and incorporated into our collections of hymns, such as that of Cowper, beginning with "God moves in a mysterious way"; that of Sir Walter Scott, with this initial line, "When Israel, of the Lord beloved"; that of Mrs. Adams, beginning with "Nearer, my God, to thee"; the Christmas hymn of Rev. Dr. Sears; and others, of which we might make up a list quite too long for the limits of this preface. Of late the attention of a large class of readers has been turned to devotional poetry, and numerous collections have been made to satisfy the demand for it,—some by authorized committees of religious denominations, and others by laymen on their own account. Some of these have had a wide circulation. I do not include the Hebrew Melodies of Byron in this enumeration, since they can scarcely be called devotional. Some of Moore's sacred songs may; and these are as well done as most of his other verses. But there is Keble, who has written largely and little else than poetry of a religious character, and who, if not always fervent, is always earnest and simple, and attains a certain classic dignity. The hymns of the Wesleys are of a warmer cast, and some of them have great literary merit, although Charles Wesley often yielded to his facility in composition and diluted his verse too freely. That his hymns were frequently thrown off in moments of devotional enthusiasm, is attested by their effect upon those who hear them sung at camp-meetings, when the throng of singers seem to catch inspiration from the words of the poet. To this stock of original poetry may be added the translations which have appeared within a few years, of the fine old mediæval hymns in Latin, well deserving by their simple grandeur to be domesticated in our language.

Some use has been made in this compilation of the writings

of authors with whom the compiler does not agree in regard to certain points of Christian doctrine. Passages from these authors have found a place here, not only because they are pertinent and well expressed, but because they strikingly illustrate the fact that the human mind, whatever creed it may hold, turns naturally and with a strong impulse to an all-wise, all-powerful and supremely benevolent Being, and is not satisfied without being, in some way, brought into communion with him. That unutterable yearning of the spirit to hold converse with the Creator, of which the apostle speaks, is not repressed even by those sceptical tendencies which pare down the religious belief of the individual to the slenderest remnant of doctrine.

To conclude, this work is designed for those who would cultivate the habit of beginning and closing the day with some grateful recognition of the goodness of God, some supplication for his continual protection, some petition for his blessing upon their brethren of the human race; some acknowledgment of the frailty of their own virtue, and the need of his aid to strengthen their good resolutions. In the contents of this volume, gathered from a large variety of sources, it is hoped that they may find passages which by the force of expression or aptness of illustration may so impress their minds that they may willingly and frequently recur to its use.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Roslyn, Long Island, October, 1877.

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MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATIONS.

Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God ; for unto thee will I pray.

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord ; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

In the morning fix thy good purpose, and at night examine thyself what thou hast done, and how thou hast behaved thyself in word, deed and thought ; for in these perhaps thou hast oftentimes offended both God and thy neighbor.—[Thomas à Kempis.]

PRAYER.

I opened my window, and seated myself in view of the heavens to collect my mind for the daily tribute of adoration to my Maker. The mere act of directing my mind to Him, in the presence of his glorious work, filled me with an inexpressible, though tranquil and rational, delight. I said to myself, What a glorious gift conscious existence is in itself ! Heaven must essentially consist in the absence of whatever disturbs the quiet enjoyment of that consciousness — in the intimate conviction of the presence of God.—[Blanco White.]

And Jesus said, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than these.

There is a sentiment of the morning. The darkness is rolled away from the earth; the iron slumber of the world is broken; it is the daily resurrection-hour of rejoicing millions. God hath said again, "Let there be light"; and over the mountain-tops and over the waves of ocean it comes, and streams in upon the waking creation. Each morning that signal light, calling to action, is at thy window; duly it cometh, as with a message, saying, "Awake, arise!" Thou wakest; from dreamy slumbers, from helpless inactivity; and what dost thou find? Hast thou lost anything of thyself in that slumber of forgetfulness? Hath not all been kept for thee? Hath there not been a watch over thy sleep? Thou wakest; and each limb is filled with life; each sense holds its station in thy wonderful frame; each faculty, each thought is in its place; no dark insanity, no dreary eclipse hath spread itself over thy soul. What shall the thoughts of that hour be, but wondering and adoring thoughts? Well are a portion of our prayers called *matins*. Morning prayers — morning prayers; orisons in the first light of day, from the bended soul, if not from the bended knee; were not the morning desecrated and denied, if a part and portion of it were not prayer?

[O. Dewey.]

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The whole scheme of our voluntary actions, all that we do from morning to night of every day, is beyond doubt intrusted to our control. * * * And from our inmost consciousness we do know, that whatever we will, we can *make ourselves* execute whatever we approve ; and strangle in its birth, whatever we abhor. To-morrow morning, if you choose to take up a spirit of such power, you may rise, like a soul without a past ; disengaged from the manifold coil of willing usage. The coming hours are open yet, pure and spotless receptacles for whatever you may deposit there. * * * There they lie in non-existence still ; ready to be organized by a creative spirit of beauty, or made foul with deformity and waste. * * * * Let us start up and live : here come the moments that cannot be had again ; some few may yet be filled with imperishable good.—[J. Martineau.]

O Lord, our God, the Fountain of Light, and the Well-spring of all holy wisdom and knowledge ; without whose aid our search after thee and thy ways is but tedious error and dangerous wandering from thee ; assist us mercifully in our endeavors after thee ; sanctifie our hearts unto obedience, that we may unfeignedly love thee, and worthily magnifie thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—[Henry More.]

For thou Lord hast made me glad through thy works : I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works : and thy thoughts are very deep.

I can do nothing without the help of God, and that even from moment to moment.—[St. Athanasius.]

WITH THEE.

Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee ;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than the daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, *I am with Thee !*

Alone with Thee, amid the mystic shadows,
The solemn hush of nature newly born ;
Alone with Thee in breathless adoration,
In the calm dew and freshness of the morn.

As in the dawning o'er the waveless ocean
The image of the morning star doth rest,
So in this stillness Thou beholdest only
Thine image in the waters of my breast.

Still, still with Thee ! As to each new-born morning
A fresh and solemn splendor still is given,
So doth this blessed consciousness, awaking,
Breathe, each day, nearness unto Thee and heaven.

When sinks the soul, subdued by toil, to slumber,
Its closing eye looks up to Thee in prayer ;
Sweet the repose beneath thy wings o'ershading,
But sweeter still to wake and find Thee there.

So shall it be at last, in that bright morning
When the soul waketh and life's shadows flee :
Oh, in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought, *I am with Thee !*

[Mrs. H. B. Stowe.]

MORNING HYMN.

Now the shades of night are gone ;
Now the light begins to dawn :
Lord, may we be thine to-day ;
Drive the shades of sin away.

Fill our souls with heavenly light ;
Banish doubt and clear our sight.
In thy service, Lord, to-day,
May we stand and watch and pray.

Keep our haughty passions bound ;
Guard us from our foes around ;
Going out and coming in,
Keep us safe from every sin.

[Episcopal Collection.]

Daily ought we to renew our purposes, and to stir up ourselves to greater fervor, and to say, “Help me, my God ! in this my good purpose and in thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly ; for that which I have hitherto done is as nothing.”

If thou canst not continually recollect thyself, yet do it sometimes, at the least once a day,—namely, in the morning or at night.—[Thomas à Kempis.]

To live with the invisible and in it, to make our dull common life, and the pictorial show that doth encompass it, the image of the character of God, the picture of his work in us and on the world, this is forever one of the noblest exercises of Christian faith.—[Brooke.]

PRAYER FROM ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

O God, the spring of being and goodness, who hast stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, thy fingers setting them all with sweet and admirable order in a beautiful frame,} * * * I beseech thee to accept the tribute of my unfeigned thanks for all thy love and goodness to me, for the many comforts and blessings with which thou hast supplied me; and in particular, that I am again risen up in health to see the light of another morning. I laid me down to sleep without my own care of myself,—yet no plague of darkness has hurt me, for thou wert my keeper. * * * Every day brings with it a return of loving kindness and tender mercies. * * * God my King, my most loving and gracious Father, I would walk all the day long as in thy hand; yea, I will extol thee, I will bless thee, I will live unto thee forever and ever. Amen.

Touch my heart, O God, with thoughts of thy love; in my soul, thy temple, erect thou an altar of praise, of penitence, of thanksgiving. Hold me up this day above the mists of passion, of selfishness, of earthliness; increase in me this day desires after holiness; incline my heart unto thee, the God of my life. Give strength to my higher, my better self, against my lower nature, that is prone to gain the mastery, and save me for thy goodness' sake.

The universe is but one great city, full of beloved ones, divine and human, by nature endeared to each other.

[Epictetus.]

MORNING PRAYER.

So fit and useful is morning devotion, it ought not to be omitted without necessity. If God finds no place in our minds at that early and peaceful hour, he will hardly recur to us in the tumults of life. If the benefits of the morning do not soften us, we can hardly expect the heart to melt with gratitude through the day. If the world then rush in and take possession of us, when we are at some distance and have had a respite from its cares, how can we hope to shake it off when we shall be in the midst of it, pressed and agitated by it on every side?—[Channing.]

That the period immediately after rising should be scrupulously consecrated to God ; that the earliest thoughts of the day should be filled with God ; that the homage of self-dedication should be renewed before starting on another pilgrimage ; that we should listen to his small voice of warning or encouragement as it issues from his written word, or from the inner consciousness, or from the outer world ; all this is so essentially bound up with the peace and holiness of the day, that one might almost say the two are inseparable. The tone and sentiment and feeling throughout the day are sure to take their coloring from the morning hour.—[Goulbrun.]

I beseech thee, Lord, teach me to seek thee, and show thyself to the seeker, because I can neither seek thee unless thou teach me, nor find thee unless thou shovest thyself to me.—[St. Anselm.]

MATINS.

I cannot ope mine eyes,
But thou art ready there to catch
My morning-soul and sacrifice.

My God, what is a heart,
That thou shouldst it so eye and woo,
Pouring upon it all thy art,
As if that thou hadst nothing else to do?

Teach me thy love to know,
That this new light, which now I see,
May both the work and workman show,—
Then by a sunbeam I will climb to thee.

[Herbert.]

Prayer has the power of sanctifying life, because it brings God into life. Twice in the day it has been for ages the habit of the race to use this talisman; once for the sanctification of the day, once for the sanctification of the night. The morning prayer chimes in with the joy of the creation, with the quick world as it awakes and sings. It ought to bind itself up with the rising of the sun, the opening of the flowers, the divine service of the birds, the glow of cloudy bars on which the rays of light strike, a musician's fingers, and whose notes are chords and color. The voice of the world is prayer, and our morning worship should be in tune with its ordered hymn of praise. But in joy we should recall our weakness and ask his presence who is strength and redemption, so that joy may be married to watchfulness by humility. Such a prayer is the guard of life.—[Brooke.]

PRAYER.

O thou Infinite One, who dwellest not only in temples made with hands, but art a perpetual presence, we flee unto thee, who art always with us, and pray that we may commune with thy spirit face to face for a moment, feeling thy presence with us, and pouring out our gratitude unto thee ; and amid all the noises of earth may the still, small voice of thy spirit come into our soul, wakening our noblest faculties to new life. O thou Infinite One, we lift our thoughts unto thee, our dependent souls constraining us unto thee, that we may rest us under the shadow of thy wings, and be warmed by thy love, and sheltered and blessed by the tender mercy wherewith thou regardest all of thy children. We adore and worship thee, calling thee by every name of power, of wisdom, of beauty and of love ; but we know that none of these can fully describe thee to ourselves, for thou transcendentest our utmost thought of thee.

We remember our own daily lives before thee, and we mourn that, gifted with a nature so large, and surrounded with opportunities so admirable, we have yet often stained our bodies with our souls' transgression, and that unclean and unholy sentiments have lodged within us, yea, nestled there and been cherished and brooded over by our consciousness. We lament that we have had within us feelings which we would not that others should bear towards us, and have done unrighteous deeds. We take shame to ourselves for these things, and we pray thee that we may gather suffering thence and sorrow of heart, till we learn to cast these evils behind us, and live nobler and more

natural lives, inward of piety, and outward of goodness towards all.

We remember the temptations that are before us, when passion from within is allied with opportunity from without, and that we have so often therein gone astray ; and we pray thee that the spirit of religion may be so strong within us that it shall enable us to overcome evil, and prove ourselves stronger from every trial. Amen.

[Parker.]

Ask yourself the simple question, whether in a confused mass of events such as make up our lives, some regulating thought is not necessary ; amidst superficial forms and overspreading disguises, some deeper searchings ; amidst the swaying and misleading senses, some penetrating meditation. Ask whether, when everything is carrying the mind out of itself, some daily self-communion, sinking to the depths within, and whether, amidst the loud bustle of hurrying life, some daily and solemn pause, some deeper silence in the soul, be not good and wise. One such quiet and silent hour, some solemn moments even, would at times strip off many of the illusions of sense, and of the world, that slowly wind themselves about us, and would unveil to us the great and eternal realities of our being. One gaze at the stars, in the solemn silence of night, is often enough to break up some spell of worldly vanity or trouble. But from deeper meditation, how often would a man come forth with a freer step and a more fearless spirit—a being loftier and more independent, stronger to meet temptation and to bear calamity !—[Dewey.]

“ My voice shalt Thou hear this morning,
For the shades have passed away,
And out from the dark like a joyous lark
My heart soars up with the day ;
And its burden all is blessing,
And its accents all are song ;
For Thou hast refreshed its slumbers,
And thy strength hath made it strong.

“ My voice shalt Thou hear this morning,
For the day is all unknown ;
And I am afraid without thine aid
To travel its hours alone.
Give me thy light to lead me,
Give me thy hand to guide,
Give me thy living presence,
To journey side by side.”

Morning and evening in prayer I will strive to feel God, and the whole day through I will be glad in him ; and every pleasure I will say to myself is from him. So through faith I will see the hand of God above me, and I will see it often, and get used to the sight ; so that when it shuts upon my soul to withdraw it from the world I shall not be afraid, but glad.—[Euthanasy.]

To meditate daily, to pray daily, seems a means indispensable for breaking this surface crust of formality, habit, routine, which hides the living springs of wisdom.

[Dewey.]

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ABOUT PRAYER: Go not, my friend, into the dangerous world without it. You kneel down at night to pray, and drowsiness weighs down your eyelids; a hard day's work is a kind of excuse, and you shorten your prayer and resign yourself softly to repose. The morning breaks, and it may be you rise late, and so your early devotions are not done, or are done with irregular haste. No watching unto prayer! wakefulness once more omitted; and now is that reparable? We solemnly believe not. There has been *that* done which cannot be undone. You have given up your prayer, and you will suffer for it. Temptation is before you, and you are not ready to meet it. There is a guilty feeling on the soul, and you linger at a distance from God. It is no marvel if that day in which you suffer drowsiness to interfere with prayer, be a day in which you shrink from duty. Moments of prayer intruded on by sloth cannot be made up. We may get experience, but we cannot get back the rich freshness and strength which were wrapped up in those moments.

[Robertson.]

To enjoy God and heaven it does not require that we wait till the last touch of death reveals all things in the light of eternity. We may take God and heaven along with us every day, and carry their peace and glory into all the dull and prosaic scenes of earth. If our hearts are expanding in tireless and limitless affections, if we are wedded to a beneficent and holy work, we have already entered the eternal life, and our death will be but a step on and up.—[Rev. Thomas Lathrop.]

EVENING DEVOTION.

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
 It hath not been my use to pray
 With moving lips or bended knees ;
 But silently, by slow degrees,
 My spirit I to love compose,
 In humble trust mine eyelids close,
 With reverential resignation
 No wish conceived, no thought expressed !
 Only a sense of supplication,
 A sense o'er all my soul imprest
 That I am weak, yet not unblest,
 Since in me, round me, everywhere,
 Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

True deuotio[n]

[S. T. Coleridge.]

Can we know thee, O my God, and not love thee ?
 Thee, who surpassest in greatness and power, and goodness and bounty, in magnificence, in all sorts of perfections, and what is more to me, in thy love for me. Thou permittest, thou commandest me to love thee. Shall the mad passions of the world be indulged with ardor, and we love thee with a cold and measured love ? Oh, no ! My God, let not the earthly be stronger than the divine love. Send thy spirit into my heart ; it is open to thee ; it is all known to thee. I can give only my love ; increase it, Almighty God, and render it more worthy thee.

[Fenelon.]

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

HOW TO PRAY.

First, when I feel that I am become cold and indisposed to prayer, by reason of other business and thoughts, I take my psalter and run into my chamber, or, if day and reason serve, into the church to the multitude, and begin to repeat to myself—just as children use—the ten commandments, the creed, and, according as I have time, some sayings of Christ, or of Paul, or some psalms. Therefore it is well to let prayer be the first employment in the early morning, and the last in the evening. Avoid diligently those false and deceptive thoughts which say, Wait a little, I will pray an hour hence; I must first perform this or that. For, with such thoughts, a man quits prayer for business, which lays hold of and entangles him, so that he comes not to pray the whole day long.—[Martin Luther.]

“If thou love Him,
Walking truly in his ways;
Then no trouble, cross, or death
E'er shall silence faith and praise.
All things serve thee here beneath,
If thou love God!”

Wish to be a child of God, and then sunshine and frost, and friends and enemies, and youth and age, and business and pleasures, and all things will help to make you. The holy spirit is a spirit, and not one mood of the mind; it is not sabbatical, but daily; it is not a morning and an evening temper, but a perpetual presence in us.—[Euthanasy.]

“Thy way, not mine, O God !
 However dark it be !
Lead me by thine own hand ;
 Choose out the path for me.

“The kingdom that I seek
 Is thine ; so let the way
That leads to it be thine,
 Else I must surely stray.

“Take thou my cup, and it
 With joy or sorrow fill ;
Be Thou my guide, my strength,
 My wisdom, and my all.”

It is so, that we must come to the sense of the deepness of the blessing of the life we live. Go into the heart of it, at whatever labor and pain ; enter mightily into its duties ; watch not for its shadow alone, as complainers do, but most of all for its light. * * * We may well thank God, and take courage, and march on, when we know that the pillars of cloud by day and of fire by night, are set fast in the divine order, to guide us on our way. Let us be sure that all is well whatever comes, while we trust and *stand fast* and *strive* ; and only hopeless, and rightly hopeless, when we want what we are in no wise willing to *earn*. The glory and glow of life come by right living.

[Robert Collyer.]

“Seek a convenient time to retire into thyself, and meditate often upon God’s loving-kindnesses.”

TO NIGHT.

Mysterious night ! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and shade ?
Yet 'neath the curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came ;
And lo ! creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O sun ? or who could find,
While fly and leaf and insect lay revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind ?
Why do we then shun death with anxious strife ?
If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life ?

[Blanco White.]

It is in the calmness of the soul,—not when its passions are awake, not in its insensibility, but in its calmness,—that we become most conscious of the divine presence. Thus the prophet sought his cave, and the patriarch went out at eventide to meditate, and Jesus found on the solitary summit of the mountain a place where he might be alone to pray. * * * We need more than the patriarchs of old to go forth at eventide to meditate, and to seek in the quietness of the heart the presence of God.

[Ephraim Peabody.]

The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart. He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

[Paul.]

In the deep stillness of the voiceless night,
 When, chased by airy dreams, the slumbers flee,
 Whom in the darkness doth my spirit seek,
 O God, but thee?

And if there be a weight upon my breast,
 Some vague impression of the day foregone,
 Scarce knowing what it is, I fly to thee,
 And lay it down.

Or if it be the heaviness that comes
 In token of anticipated ill,
 My bosom takes no heed of what it is,
 Since 'tis thy will.

For, oh, in spite of past and present care,
 Or anything beside, how joyfully
 Passes that almost solitary hour,
 My God, with thee!

More tranquil than the still approach of eve,
 More peaceful than the silent brooding hour,
 More blest than aught beside, my spirit lies
 Beneath thy power.

For what is there on earth that I desire,
 Of all that it can give or take from me,
 Or whom in heaven doth my spirit seek,
 O God, but thee?

[Anonymous.]

Coleridge said he thought the act of praying to be, in its perfect form, the very highest *energy* of which the human heart was capable.

Prayer not only in the morning watch, but prayer sent voiceless from the heart from hour to hour. Then life is wakeful, hallowed, calm. It becomes beautiful with that beauty of God, which eye hath not seen. * * * And day being hallowed thus, do not omit to make holy the night. Take by the power of prayer, through the wild land of dreams, the sanctifying presence of one who loves us. Claim it every night, and it will attend to hallow the fancies of sleep, to save us from the baseness of dream-fear, to call back the wandering fancy from impurity. For prayer, continually lived in, makes the presence of a holy and loving God the air which life breathes, and by which it lives, so that, as itminglesconsciouslywiththework of the day, it becomes also a part of every dream. To us, then, it will be no strange thing to enter heaven, for we have been living in the things of heaven.—[Brooke.]

All times and seasons are moral ; the serene and bright morning ; that wakening of all nature to life ; that silence of the early dawn, as it were the silence of expectation ! that freshening glow, that new inspiration of life, as if it came from the breath of heaven ; but the holy eventide also, its cooling breeze, its falling shade, its hushed and sober hour ; the sultry noon tide, too, and the solemn midnight ; and springtime and chastening autumn ; and summer that unbars our gates and carries us forth amidst the ever-renewed wonders of the world ; and winter that gathers us around the evening hearth : all these, as they pass, touch by turns the springs of the spiritual life in us, and are conducting that life to good or evil.—[Dewey.]

EVENING PRAYER.

I come to Thee to-night,
 In my lone closet where no eye can see,
 And dare to crave an interview with Thee,
 Father of love and light.

Thou gav'st the calm repose
 That rests on all ; the air, the birds, the flower,
 The human spirit in its weary hour,
 Now at the bright day's close.

'Tis nature's time for prayer ;
 The silent praises of the glorious sky,
 And the earth's orisons, profound and high,
 To heaven their breathings bear.

If I this day have striven
 With thy blest Spirit, or have bowed the knee
 To aught of earth in weak idolatry,
 I pray to be forgiven.

If in my heart has been
 An unforgiving thought, or word, or look,
 Though deep the malice which I scarce could brook,
 Wash me from the dark sin.

If I have turned away
 From grief or suffering which I might relieve,
 Careless the cup of water e'en to give,
 Forgive me, Lord, I pray.

And teach me how to feel
 My sinful wanderings with a deeper smart,
 And more of mercy and of grace impart,
 My sinfulness to heal.—[Hymns of the Ages.]

“ What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” is to us the most undeniable of all arguments ; “ What shall I do to be saved?” the most reasonable and momentous of all questions ; “ God be merciful to me a sinner!” the most affecting of all prayers. The soul’s concern is the great concern. The interests of experimental, vital, practical religion are the great interests of our being. No language can be too strong, no language can be strong enough, to give them due expression. No anxiety is too deep, no care too heedful, no effort too earnest, no prayer too importunate, to be bestowed upon this almost infinite concern of the soul’s purification, piety, virtue and welfare. No labor of life should be undertaken, no journey pursued, no business transacted, no pleasure enjoyed, no activity employed, no rest indulged in, without ultimate reference to that great end of our being. Without it, life has no sufficient object, and death has no hope, and eternity no promise.

[Dewey.]

Practice to make God thy last thought at night when thou sleepest, and thy first thought in the morning when thou awakest : so shall thy fancy be sanctified in the night, and thy understanding be rectified in the day ; so shall thy rest be peaceful and thy labors prosperous.—[Quarles.]

Oh, help us, Father ! from on high,
We know no help but thee ;
Oh, help us so to live and die
As thine in heaven to be !

[Russian.]

Men never take so firm a hold of God as in secret. Thou shouldst pray alone, for thou hast sinned alone, and thou art to die alone, and to be judged alone. Why not get alone to the mercy seat? In the great transaction between thee and God, thou canst have no human helper. You are not going to tell him any secret. You may be sure he will not betray your confidence. "Enter into thy closet," says Christ. He says not *a* closet, nor *the* closet, but thy closet. The habit of secret communion is supposed to be formed. The man is supposed to have a closet—some place in which he is accustomed to retire for prayer—some spot consecrated by many a meeting there with God—some place that has often been to him a Bethel. The Saviour uses the word to mean any place where, with no embarrassment either from the fear or pride of observation, we can freely pour out our hearts in prayer to God. Christ's closet was a mountain, Isaac's a field, Peter's the house-top.—[Nevins.]

Plato declared that the best and noblest action which a virtuous man can perform is to live by vows and prayers, in continual intercourse with Deity; nay, all who would act with due consideration ought, before beginning any undertaking, whether great or small, to invoke God.

Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of mine hands as the evening sacrifice.

Incline not my heart to any evil thing.

“Lord, when I quit this earthly stage,
Where shall I fly but to thy breast?
For I have sought no other home,
For I have learned no other rest.

“I cannot live contented here
Without some glimpses of thy face ;
And heaven without thy presence there,
Would be a dark and lonesome place.

“When earthly cares engross the day,
And hold my thoughts aside from thee,
The shining hours of cheerful light
Are long and tedious years to me.

“And if no evening visit 's paid
Between my Maker and my soul,
How dull the night ! how sad the shade !
How mournfully the minutes roll !”

Sum up at night what thou hast done by day ;
And in the morning what thou hast to do ;
Dress and undress thy soul ; mark the decay
And growth of it. * * * *

In brief, acquit thee bravely ; play the man ;
Look not on pleasures as they come, but go ;
Defer not the least virtue ; life's poor span
Make not an ell by trifling in thy woe.
If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains ;
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.

O God within, so close to me
That every thought is plain,
Be judge, be friend, be Father still,
And in thy heaven reign !
Thy heaven is mine,—my very soul !
Thy words are sweet and strong ;
They fill my inward silences
With music and with song.

[W. C. Gannett.]

Great Father of spirits, who alone madest the heart, and who only canst persuade it, do thou draw me unto thee. Lead me often to the faithful mirror of thy word, that I may dress myself thereby, and daily put on more of the ornaments and beauties of holiness ; even that I may frame all my ways and words and very thoughts upon that model, the mind of Christ. Surely, good Lord, in thus preparing myself to meet thee, I have by far the sweetest life the world can give !—[Leighton.]

There is a sentiment of the eventide ; when the sun slowly sinks from our sight ; when the shadows steal over the earth ; when the shining hosts of the stars come forth ; when other worlds and other regions of the universe are unveiled in the infinitude of heaven. Then to meditate, how reasonable, I had almost said how inevitable, is it ! How meet were it then that in every house there should be a vesper hymn !—[Dewey.]

We need something that shall make our prayerful hours support each other,—the morning tributary to the evening, and the evening to the morning. Nothing else can do this so naturally as the habit of *ejaculatory* prayer. The *spirit* of prayer may run along the line of such a habit through a lifetime. So, one may live in a *state* of prayer! * * * Life is a succession of temptations; temptations are emergencies; and for the emergencies we need the preparation and the safeguard of prayer. We have duties which are perilous. We meet surprises of evil. We feel perplexities of conscience, in which holy decision depends on the mind we bring to them. We encounter disappointments which throw us back from our hopes rudely. We have an *unknown* experience opening upon us every hour. Providence is thus continually calling for the aids of prayer.—[A. Phelps.]

Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses, for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

SPIRITUAL NEEDS AND AIMS.

What have I yet to do?
Day weareth on,—
Flowers that opening new,
Smiled through the morning dew,
Droop in the sun.

Yet must I labor still
All the day through,—
Striving with earnest will,
Patient my place to fill,
My work to do.

Up, then, to work again !
God's word is given,
That none shall sow in vain,
But find his ripened grain
Garnered in heaven.

[Anonymous.]

The most truly religious thing that a man can do is to fight his way through habits and deficiencies, and back to pure, manlike elements of his nature, which are the inefaceable traces of the divine workmanship, and alone really worth fighting for.—[Weiss.]

A PRAYER FROM DR. DEWEY.

O Thou Infinite Being, of whom and in whom is all being; by whose power all is done that is done in heaven and earth; who hast appointed our lot and determined the bounds of our habitation; whose wisdom is unerring, whose goodness is unbounded, whose ways are past finding out; we bow before thee, weak, erring and blind, and know but to say, Our Father.

O Thou who doest thy pleasure in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, God, Father; Thou who causest thy sun to rise on the evil and the good, and makest affliction thy strange work, God, Father; Thou who from the beginning hast led thy children in ways of holy living and dying, and chastenest every soul that thou lovest, God, Father; we believe in thee; we believe in thine almighty power, in thine all-comprehending providence, and thy tender mercy.

Thou hast given us being. Thou hast made us in thine image. Thou hast sent something from thyself,—that in us which aspires to Thee,—to dwell in these forms of frail mortality. May we not believe that thou hast regard for it; yea, infinite consideration and compassion? O Father-Spirit! thy child-spirit cries to thee. In thee is light and no darkness at all. But we are in darkness. Thee no error, no evil can approach; look in pity upon our erring and wandering. To thee no infirmity, no pain nor sorrow nor peril can come nigh; but we are weak and oftentimes weary and sorrowful, subject to sickness and pain and death; subject to fear and doubt and trouble, and struggling with thoughts of life and death, of time and eternity, beyond the reach of our souls to bear alone. Oh!

come to our help, Almighty, All-Wise, All-Perfect One ; send us light, send us peace, give strength, give patience and humility.

We know that all is right, that all is well. We know that thou hast given us our life and nature, and this world to dwell in, and we believe that thou hast put no more darkness nor difficulty nor pain into our lot than is expedient for us ; and that as we do not love them, so dost not thou for themselves alone ; and that thou dost not send them for thy pleasure, but for our profit. And we believe in thine infinite love for us, in all the trials and sorrows of our mortal lot. Oh ! strengthen in us that great and comforting faith ; take part with the light in us, against the darkness ; give victory to the good in us over the evil, to faith over doubt, to life immortal over death. Give us to partake of the victory of the dying and the living Christ—to be conquerors and more than conquerors through him that hath loved us ; and to thy name be adoration, praise and glory, evermore. Amen.

There is a wide distinction between having a religious nature and being in a religious life ; between feeling after God and finding him. * * * Religious character is more than mere natural character, and different from it. * * * It is that which lies in choice, and for which we are thus responsible. It is made by what the soul's liberty goes after with a reigning devotion ; what it chooses and lives for as its end. * * * Let it never be disguised from us that our salvation lies in finding God, and that we may know our salvation only as we know that we have found him as the graciously felt preserver, the conductor, guide, peace, joy of our hearts.—[Dr. Bushnell.]

Come, Holy Spirit, from above,
And from the realms of light and love
Thine own bright rays impart.

Come, Father of the fatherless,
Come, Giver of all happiness,
Come, Lamp of every heart.

O thou, of comforters the best,
O thou, the soul's most welcome guest,
O thou, our sweet repose ;
Our resting place from life's long care,
Our shadow from the world's fierce glare,
Our solace in all woes.

O Light divine, all light excelling,
Fill with thyself the inmost dwelling
Of souls sincere and lowly :
Without thy pure divinity,
Nothing in all humanity,
Nothing is strong or holy.

Wash out each dark and sordid stain—
Water each dry and arid plain,
Raise up the bruised reed.
Enkindle what is cold and chill,
Relax the stiff and stubborn will,
Guide those that guidance need.

Give to the good, who find in thee
The Spirit's perfect liberty,
Thy sevenfold power and love.
Give virtue strength its crown to win,
Give struggling souls their rest from sin,
Give endless peace above.—[Lyte.]

How hard it is to feel that the power of life is to be found inside, not outside ; in the heart and thoughts, not in the visible actions and show ; in the living seed, not in the plant which has no root ! How often do men cultivate the garden of their souls just the other way ! How often do we try, and persevere in trying, to make a sort of neat show of outer good qualities, without anything within to correspond, just like children who plant blossoms without any roots in the ground to make a pretty show for the hour ! We find faults in our lives, and we cut off the weed, but we do not root it up ; we find something wanting in ourselves, and we supply it, not by sowing the divine seed of a heavenly principle, but by copying the deeds that the principle ought to produce.—[Temple.]

O my God and Father, I desire to love thee, and fear lest I should not love thee as I ought. I ask of thee an abundant and pure love. Thou seest this desire, for thou hast implanted it in me : regard, then, the want which thou beholdest in thy creature. O God, whose love to me is sufficient to inspire a boundless affection in return, look not upon the torrent of iniquity in which I was almost swallowed up, but rather on thy mercy. Lord, thou art the God of nature ; thou art the soul of all being ; thine are all things, and shall not my heart be thine, that heart which thou hast formed and dost keep in life ? It is thine and no longer mine. Do with me as thou wilt, I care not since I love thee.—[Fenelon.]

He needs no other rosary whose thread of life is strung with beads of love and thought.—[Persian.]

I thirst ! Oh, grant the waters pure
Which they who drink shall thirst no more.
Oh, give me of that living stream
Which ever flows with heavenly gleam
Forth from the presence of our God,
Through fields by holy angels trod.

I thirst ! O bounteous source of truth,
Give coolness to my fevered youth,
Make the sick heart more strong and wise,
Take spectral visions from mine eyes.
Oh, let me quench my thirst in thee,
And pure and strong and holy be !

I thirst ! O God, great source of love,
Infinite life streams from above,
Oh, give one drop and let me live !
The barren world has naught to give,
No solace have its streams for me ;
I thirst alone for heaven and thee.

[Frederika Bremer.]

Let him rejoice and thank God, who in sincerity and fullness of heart can daily kneel down and commune with the Infinite ; and if any consecrating power of habit, of times, of seasons, of thoughtful meditation, can bring to him one truthful, yearning aspiration after the Father, let him cling to that as the dearest portion and joy of his soul, the promise of his progress and prosperity, the talisman of his inward peace.—[Withington.]

THE DEVOUT PHILOSOPHER'S PRAYER.

“Sublime and Living Will ! named by no name, compassed by no thought ! I may well raise my soul to thee, for thou and I are not divided. Thy voice sounds within me, mine resounds in thee ; and all my thoughts, if they be but good and true, live in thee also. In thee, the Incomprehensible, I myself, and the world in which I live, become clearly comprehensible to me ; all the secrets of my existence are laid open, and perfect harmony arises in my soul. Thou art best known to the childlike, devoted, simple mind. To it thou art the searcher of hearts, who seest its inmost depths ; the ever-present true witness of its thoughts, who knowest its truth, who knowest it though all the world know it not. Thou art the Father who ever desirest its good, who rulest all things for the best. To thy will it unhesitatingly resigns itself : ‘ Do with me,’ it says, ‘ what thou wilt ; I know that it is good, for it is Thou who doest it.’ ”

O make us apt to seek and quick to find,
Thou God most kind !

Give us love, hope and faith in thee to find,
Thou God most kind !

Remit all our offences, we entreat,
Most good, most great !

Grant that our willing though unworthy quest
May, through thy grace, admit us ‘mongst the blest.

[Thomas Heywood.]

As a countenance is made beautiful by the soul's shining through it, so the world is beautiful by the shining through it of a God.—[Jacobi.]

“ We have to ‘ *work out our salvation*,’ but the work is mainly to be done by the unseen exertion of the invisible soul. * * * It is when sins of thought and feeling are indulged that they grow into sins of life and conduct ; and after all, our great sins,—the main things we have to confess and seek pardon for,—are sins of thought and feeling rather than of life and conduct. * * * Our great sins, in short, are the sins of the heart ; and rightly to ‘ *rule our spirit*’ is the sum, the essence of all our Christian duty. And to do that, what a noble work ! how hard in its progress, how glorious in its results ! All that shall make us like our Saviour, all that shall make us meet for heaven, lies in that work ! No strength of our own is equal to it, but only his might who regenerates and sanctifies. Oh ! may he be poured down upon us day by day ! And so, through many duties, many trials, many temptations, many cares, we shall hold still that central peace of mind which is promised to the man whose mind is stayed upon his God ; we shall be victors, in a noiseless battle, fighting day by day in many quiet places,—fought in by shrinking women and by men ;—a battle which is the heaviest strain upon human pith and endurance, and yet which may end in the most glorious rewards which can ever be won by human being.”

I know of nothing to give unfailing moral energy to the mind but a living faith in a being of infinite perfections, and who is always with us to aid, strengthen, reward, reprove, chasten, and guide to immortality.

[Channing.]

My Father, it is dark. “Child, take my hand,
Cling close to me, I'll lead thee through the land ;
Trust my all-seeing care ; so shalt thou stand
'Mid glory bright above.”

My footsteps seem to slide. “Child, only raise
Thine eyes to me ; then in these slippery ways
I will uphold thy goings ; thou shalt praise
Me for each step above.”

[Day unto Day.]

“Walk before me, and be thou perfect.” These are the words of God to faithful Abraham. Whoever walks in thy presence, O Lord, is in the path to perfection. We never depart from this holy way but we lose sight of thee and cease to behold thee in everything. Alas, where shall we go when we no longer see thee ; thee who art our light and the only goal to which our steps should tend ? To have our eyes fixed on thee in every step we take is our only security that we shall never go astray. O God, I will fix my eyes on thee ; I will behold thee in everything that is around me. The order of thy providence shall arrest my attention. My heart shall still see thee in the midst of the busy cares of life, in all its duties, all its concerns ; for they shall all be fulfilled in obedience to thy will. Temptations are without and within us ; we should be lost, O Lord, without thee. To thee I raise my eyes, upon thee I rest my heart ; my own weakness frightens me. Thy all-powerful mercy will support my infirmity.

[Fenelon.]

One means of winning the divine life is the cultivation of a devotional temper, of prayerful aspiration and desire ; a purposeful throwing open of the avenues of the soul, and an earnest imploring of truth, goodness, beauty and repose ; a penitent praying to God for pardon, and a beseeching of him to come in with his blessing,—come dwell in a breast that fain would love him. Cherish humility, godly sorrow, trustful uplooking ; for the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. When you walk abroad, sometimes cast your eyes into the far blue heaven with speechless longings. They will not be in vain, but will procure tokens of celestial favor. Kneel in your closet and say, “ O God ! I have not known thee : deign to reveal thyself to me ; teach me to love and obey thee ; by all thy goodness, oh, forgive my wanderings, and let me feel the tranquillity of a life hid in thy blessedness.” Such petitions will not be unheard, nor fail to bring down answers of growing fulfilment.—[Alger.]

God is known and seen and trusted by thousands of souls who need no other evidence of his being or his will than what is directly revealed to their hearts. There is that within us more sacred than cathedral altar, or stained window, or sacred writing. It is the soul itself.

[Bellows.]

Send down thy constant aid, we pray,
Be thy pure angels with us still ;
Thy truth, be that our firmest stay,
Our only rest to do Thy will.

[O. B. Frothingham.]

“Alone, of all earthly beings, man prays. With transport or with trembling, publicly or in the privacy of his heart, man betakes himself to prayer in the last resort, to fill the emptiness of his soul, or to relieve the burdens of his lot: it is in prayer that he seeks, when everything else fails him, support in his feebleness, consolation in his griefs, and hope for his virtue.” * * * This is one of the eminent blessings of prayer: it gives serenity, calmness, peace, trust, after the anxieties of expectancy, the exultations of success, the agonies of sorrow and bereavement. *What is* prayer, that it will make us thus tranquil and joyous, thus calm and trustful? *What is* prayer, that it purifies and exalts us, helps us to live worthily and hopefully? It is an irrepressible sense of want seeking supplies from the Infinite Fullness. It is aspiration climbing along the craggy pathways to the Fountain of all joys and fruits.—[Simmons.]

Must we not fight every hour, with these besetting foes of the spirit? In the depths of the heart, in deepest silence where praise comes not; with solitary prayer and patience, must we not strive? And here in this post within, to be held against all the world, deeds are to be done and victories to be gained, compared with which the prowess of battles and the splendor of triumphs fade away!

[Dewey.]

If we but lived as we ought to live, and as we might live, a power would go out from us that would make every day a lyric sermon that should be seen and felt by an ever-enlarging audience.—[Starr King.]

Father divine, this deadening power control,
Which to the senses binds the immortal soul ;
Oh break this bondage, Lord, I would be free,
And in my soul would find my heaven in thee.

My heaven in thee ! O God, no other heaven
To the immortal soul can e'er be given ;
Oh let thy kingdom now within me come,
And as above, so here, thy will be done !

My heaven in thee ! O Father, let me find
My heaven in thee, within a heart resigned ;
No more of heaven and bliss, my soul despair,
For where my God is found, my heaven is there.

[Dr. Tuckerman.]

“The power of religious influence and the essential value of religious activity are in proportion to the quality and the amount of secret religious life. The nearer the spirit dwells to the Father, the more bright and clear its light. And our Father is in secret; dwelleth in secret, and in secret is to be sought and found. In secret,—in spirit, in silence, in thought, in meditation, in prayer, in feeling. Through the door of the heart that opens inwards and upwards his communications of grace come in, his spirit enters to visit the soul, the divine life flows down. Through this door leads the path to highest truth. Through this door the soul correspondeth with the Deity, and in proportion to this correspondence is faith and love, is wisdom and might, is true life.”

To love and serve all men is to delight in God.

[Mencius (Chinese.)]

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PRAYER OF MARTINEAU.

O God ! thou spirit of our secret life, apart from whom our nature faints ! Weary of ourselves we come to thy shelter. Our span of troubled days we bring within thy calm eternity ; over our path of pilgrimage we feel the spaces of thine immensity ; on the dimness of our pure desires we seek the glow of thy paternal smile ; in the strife of sin and the sadness of mortality, we find a spirit of power and of hope in the memory of thy holy providence. Infinite Ruler of creation, whose spirit dwells in every world ! We look not to the solemn heavens for thee, though thou art there ; we search not in the ocean for thy presence, though it murmurs with thy voice ; we wait not for the wings of the wind to bring thee nigh, though they are thy messengers ; for thou art in our hearts, O God, and makest thy abode in the deep places of our thought and love : and into each gentle affection, each contrite sorrow, each noble aspiration, we would retire to worship thee. Lord of our living conscience, who speakest thus in the secret voice of duty, and pleadest with us in the grief of sin ! Thy creatures that know thee not have more truly served thee than our conscious minds ; and while seasons and waves obey thy word, our vacillating desires forget to finish thy work, our restless passions keep not the order of thy will. O God ! thou knowest the soul within us, that it is not built up as an immortal sanctuary for thy praise, but is a wreck of broken purposes and fallen aspirations and desecrated affections. Fountain of purity and peace ! shed on us the influence of a new hope and holier sympathies ; refresh our dry souls with the dews of a true penitence. Oh that our strength might fail, and our wills be

deluded no more, when we strive against the weight of indolence, the seductions of self-love, and the weakness of a desponding mind ! O Father ! who dost bless us always even in our griefs, and love us even in our sins ; from the spirit of Jesus the crucified, whose cry went up unto thee from his meek triumph, his passage to immortal rest, we would learn to trust thee, and look up amid the sadness of thy providence. Oh, may our human sympathies be more and more followers of thee, as dear children, and spread, like thy tranquil presence, wherever suffering is laid low, or the sigh of the oppressed is heard, or remorse retires to weep. May we sanctify ourselves and imitate thee, by blessing others. Before the breath of a divine love within us may the cloud of anxiety and the storm of fretful passions be swept away. Beneath the light of thy peace may even the valley of the shadow of death be to our feet as the green pastures and the still waters. And when we pass into that land which no eye hath seen, may we be ready to meet our forerunners there, and bless thee that the days of sorrow and temptation are finished. Amen.

Oh, where'er our path may lie,
Father, let us not forget
That we walk beneath thine eye,
That thy care upholds us yet.

Blind are we, and weak and frail :
Be thine aid forever near ;
May the fear to sin prevail
Over every other fear.

[W. C. Bryant.]

Walk in the spirit, is the direction of the Apostle. But that walking is the difficulty. So hard, so very hard it often is. * * * But always the spirit does wait on those who are willing to walk by it, and under God and Christ always will ; and to him who does walk in the Holy Spirit all outward things are spiritual helps, and the spirit of God makes itself felt not only from within us, but also by things that border our paths, that meet us in our walks, that are with us in our homes, * * * through the cold, pure beauty of sunrise, and through the grandeur with which the sun sets, and through the awfulness of the dark, * * * through words tenderly and wisely spoken by friends, and through the ongoing of time as it enlightens and changes us.—[Mountford.]

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
 As the swift seasons roll !
 Leave thy low-vaulted past !
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
 Till thou at length art free,
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea !

[O. W. Holmes.]

It is the determination of the spotless not to give sorrow to others ; and not to do evil to those who have done evil to them. If a man inflict suffering even on those who without cause hate him, it will in the end give him irremovable sorrow. The punishment of those who have done you evil is to put them to shame by showing great kindness to them.—[Hindu.]

SEEKING GOD.

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
 Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows ;
 I see from far thy beauteous light,
 Only I sigh for thy repose.
 My heart is pained ; nor can it be
 At rest, till it find rest with thee.

Thy secret voice invites me still
 The sweetness of thy yoke to prove ;
 And fain I would, but though my will
 Seem fixed, yet wide my passions rove ;
 Yet hindrances strew all the way ;
 I aim at thee, yet from thee stray.

'Tis mercy all, that thou hast brought
 My mind to seek her peace in thee ;
 Yet, while I seek, but find thee not,
 No peace my wandering soul shall see.
 Oh ! when shall all my wanderings end,
 And all my steps to theeward tend ?

Is there a thing beneath the sun
 That strives with thee my heart to share ?
 Oh ! bear it thence and reign alone,
 The Lord of every motion there !
 Then shall my heart from earth be free,
 When it hath found repose in thee.

[Translated from the German by John Wesley.]

“ Stand in awe and sin not ; commune with your own heart and be still.”

If every day's life could be from within,—if God could always act through us, and the Divine be a perennial spring within us, what nobleness might we aspire to ! * * * But how to find Him whom neither height, nor breadth, nor depth can reach, but who is never far from every one of us ? Were I to define the process, I would say, sift down your own motives and make them as pure as possible ; nay, determine that the great question, the only question of life, shall be, “ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ” and use the means of religious growth,—the old-fashioned rules of devotional culture,—meditation, self-examination, prayer. Alas, that our desire should be, not devotion itself, but the good that comes of it !

[Withington.]

To lose the soul is to lose out of one's being the pure affections and the love of truth and right. It is to lose the love of goodness and pious trust and the heavenly dower of immortal hope. * * * He that has lost his virtuous purposes, holy aspirations, devout hopes, whose soul has abdicated its high seat and become subject to the world, like the sapless and verdureless tree, is already struck with death.—[Ephraim Peabody.]

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TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

God is love. Creation is the outcome of love. By the law of nature, therefore, as well as that of grace, the same should be the ruling principle in the children of men, created in the divine image. God so *loved* the world that he gave his only begotten son. It is love all through. Love is the noblest sentiment,—the only fit and real inspirer of the Christian life.—[Christian Register.]

O Brother, who for us didst meekly wear
 The crown of thorns about thy radiant brow !
 What gospel from the Father didst thou bear,
 Our hearts to cheer, making us happy now ?
 " "Tis this alone," the immortal Saviour cries,
 " To fill thy heart with ever active love,—
 Love for the wicked as in sin he lies,
 Love for thy brother here, thy God above.
 Fear nothing ill, 't will vanish in its day ;
 Live for the good, taking the ill thou must ;
 Toil with thy might, with manly labor pray ;
 Living and loving, learn thy God to trust,
 And he will shed upon thy soul the blessing of the just."

[Parker.]

" Richter gives it as one excellent antidote against moral depression, to call up in our darkest moments the memory of our brightest ; so, in the dusty struggle and often tainted atmosphere of daily business, it is well to carry about with us the purifying influence of a high ideal of human conduct, fervidly and powerfully expressed. Superstitious persons carry amulets externally on their breasts : carry you a select store of holy texts within, and you will be much more effectively armed against the powers of evil than any most absolute monarch behind a bristling body-guard."

Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love.

Let love flow all around you, and what could harm you? It would clothe you with an impenetrable, heaven-tempered armor. Or suppose that it leaves you all defenseless, as it did Jesus: all vulnerability, through delicacy, through tenderness, through sympathy, through pity; suppose that you suffer as all must suffer; suppose that you be wounded, as gentleness can be wounded; yet how would that love flow with precious healing through every wound! How many difficulties, too, both within and without a man, would it relieve! How many dull minds would it rouse; how many depressed minds would it lift up; how many troubles in society would it compose; how many enmities would it soften; how many a knot of mystery and misunderstanding would be untied by one word spoken in simple and confiding truth of heart; how many a rough path would be made smooth, and crooked way be made straight! How many a solitary place would be made glad if love were there, and how many a dark dwelling would be filled with light!—[Dewey.]

Christ says: “Come unto me, ye weary and heavy laden; come and I will teach you how to live, so that life shall be no more a failure; I will guide you to living fountains; follow me and ye shall find rest for your souls.” And who doubts that promise? Who does not know that the misery of his life is in the disorder and anarchy of his soul, not in his outward lot? Who does not know that redemption from human misery must begin in a regeneration of the soul, in the awakening of its true life, and in the consecration of it to God?—[E. Peabody.]

ANDREW RYKMAN'S PRAYER.

Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful, so the work be thine ;
Let me find the humblest place
In the shadow of thy grace ;
Blest to me were any spot
Where temptation whispers not.
If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on ;
If a blinder soul there be,
Grant that I his guide may be.

May my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do ;
Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant ;
Let me find in thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy ;
Out of self to love be led,
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude.

[Whittier.]

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged ; condemn not and ye shall not be condemned ; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

Give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you.

Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other ; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.

Give to every man that asketh of thee ; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.—[Jesus.]

It is daily life that tests us,—the manner of men we are. It is not our prayers, it is not our professions ; but it is the tone of daily intercourse and conduct that decides how we stand. * * * The little homely graces ; the cheerful, every-day amenities ; the Christ spirit uttering itself not so much in conscious act as in unconscious influence, not so much in deeds as in that subtle aroma which without name exudes from the saintly soul ; to equals and inferiors, to agreeable and disagreeable, to rich, poor, ignorant, to young, to old ; bearing burdens, accepting crosses, seeking no great thing to do, content to put self by and be servant of the lowest,—these are fruits of one only root,—fruits that none may counterfeit.—[Ware.]

Sometimes I catch sweet glimpses of his face,
But that is all.

Sometimes he looks on me and seems to smile,
But that is all.

Sometimes he speaks a passing word of peace,
But that is all.

Sometimes I think I hear his loving voice
Upon me call.

And is this all he meant when thus he spoke,
"Come unto me"?

Is there no deeper, more enduring rest,
In him for thee?

Is there no steadier light for thee in him?
Oh come and see!

Oh come and see! Oh look, and look again!
All shall be right.

Oh taste his love and see that it is good,
Thou child of night!

Oh trust thou, trust thou in his grace and power!
Then all is bright.

Then shall thy tossing soul find anchorage
And steadfast peace;

Thy love shall rest on his: thy weary doubts
Forever cease.

Thy heart shall find in him, and in his grace,
Its rest and bliss!—[Bonar.]

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Nearer and nearer, Lord, and nearer still,
Thy work begun, fulfil ;
Shape all my life according to thy will.
Thou knowest how I aspire ;
Accept my strong desire,
Hope, heart, and mind,—my spirit's deepest deep ;
Take all to feed and keep,
Till my whole soul to love's full flower is blown,
And love's full flower to perfect fruit is grown.

[Rev. H. N. Powers.]

The Christly spirit uses the one name Jesus ever used,—“Father”; nor can there be better evidence of the growing of the Christ spirit within, than the growing consciousness that one more and more revolts at every mode of address save that, and that the secret temptation of his soul is to substitute *my* Father for “our” Father, as if he would have the claim more directly, wholly and exclusively individual.—[Ware.]

There is such a deep, fresh, manly piety in the teachings of Jesus, such love for man under all circumstances, poor, oppressed, despised and sinful, as we find nowhere else in the whole compass of antiquity.—[Parker.]

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
 What may thy service be?—
 Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
 But simply following thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,
 We pile no graven stone ;
 He serves thee best who loveth most
 His brothers and thy own.

Thy litanies sweet offices
 Of love and gratitude ;
 Thy sacramental liturgies
 The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
 The vaulted nave around,
 In vain the minster turret lift
 Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring thy Christmas bells,
 Thy inward altars raise ;
 Its faith and hope thy canticles,
 And its obedience praise !

[Whittier.]

The best name by which we can think of God is Father. It is a loving, deep, sweet, heart-touching name ; for the name of father is in its nature full of inborn sweetness and comfort. Therefore, also, we must confess ourselves children of God ; for by this name we deeply touch our God, since there is not a sweeter sound to the Father than the voice of the child.—[Martin Luther.]

“ CHRIST FORMED IN YOU.”

Why longer urge thy fruitless search ?
 The one true Christ thou shalt not find
 Until thou seek him in his church,
 All beautiful, within thy mind.

His temple is the human soul ;
 He dwelleth evermore within ;
 The harmonies of heaven roll
 For him whose life is free from sin.

Be free from foolish hates and fears,
 The love of ease, the love of self,
 And all the Christs of all the years
 Shall lead thee nearer to thyself.

Not farther off, but farther in,—
 Such is the nature of thy quest ;
 They heaven find who heaven win :
 The one true Christ is in thy breast.

[Chadwick.]

It is the life of Christ that concerns us. We are to have the same mind ; to be of like spirit ; to follow not his steps so much as his soul ; to come at one with God through oneness with him, hiding our life with his in God. His life we are to get into our lives, and in that is our peace, our strength, our joy, our rest.

Getting religion is getting the divine life in the soul ; having Jesus is having his spirit as the active principle of our spirits ; being saved is having the life hid with Christ in God,—the life which, when the door is shut, you devoutly lay before the Father, and the Father in secrecy accepts.—[Ware.]

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged ; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the the mote out of thine eye : and behold, a beam is in thine own eye ?

Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.—[Jesus.]

He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul.

CHRIST'S INVITATIONS.

Come, said Jesus' sacred voice,
Come and make my paths your choice ;
I will guide you to your home ;
Weary pilgrim ! hither come.

Thou who, houseless, sole, forlorn,
Long hast borne the proud world's scorn,
Long hast roamed the barren waste,
Weary pilgrim ! hither haste.

Ye who, tossed on beds of pain,
Seek for ease, and seek in vain ;
Ye whose swoln and sleepless eyes
Watch to see the morning rise ;

Ye, by fiercer anguish torn,
In remorse for guilt who mourn,
Here repose your heavy care ;
Who the stings of sin can bear ?

Sufferer ! come, for here is found
Balm that flows for every wound ;
Peace that ever shall endure,
Rest eternal, sacred, sure.

GOD IN THE SOUL.

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed. Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.

The soul, by its very constitution, is near to God, and lives in and from him. God is not afar off, but here with us, permeating our very being, and communicating strength, wisdom and peace, according to our willingness to receive him. * * * God is near,—a besetting God, on the right hand and on the left, ever educating, disciplining, helping his child, and striving to save and bless him. The world is full of God; the soul is full of God; for he is the omnipresent and all-pervading spirit of the universe. * * * We cannot be happy without resembling God. We cannot resemble him without contemplating his character; without adoring him; without experiencing the bliss of worship. We cannot taste this bliss without discovering that God is the fountain, and joy, and glory of our life, and that to praise and love and adore him is the real business and the true pleasure of moral existence,—the beginning and middle, and unending direction in the pursuit of blessedness and immortality.

[Bellows.]

If there is not a love of virtue, as of sweetness, in the very constitution of my nature, I have no power to love it. * * * What, then, can I do to awaken in myself good and virtuous emotion, to awaken love? I cannot will them into existence any more than I can will the love of music or of nature into existence. But this I can do; this is within the province of the will. I can *will* and *give attention* to them. I can think of the objects that should awaken good emotions. I can meditate and pray. Thus, if I have some natural good emotions, and the ability to cultivate them, I have the power to be good; and no otherwise. I *have* both.—[Dewey.]

Blessed is the soul that heareth the Lord speaking within, and receiveth from his mouth the word of consolation.

Blessed are the ears that gladly receive the pulses of the divine whisper.

Blessed indeed are those ears that listen, not after the voice that is sounding without, but for the truth teaching inwardly.

Blessed are they that enter into things internal, and endeavor to prepare themselves more and more, by daily faithfulness, for the receiving of heavenly secrets.

[Thomas à Kempis.]

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

Separated from God, man dwindleth; he is nothing. He was made to have magnitude and be in flood, by having great inspirations roll under him and through him. Existing in mere self-hood he cannot push himself out any way to be complete as from himself. A soul must have all God's properties and perfections flowing in and through; liberty and life in his life, power in his power, righteous in his righteousness, secure in his security. That is, it must have the Infinite life which it was originally made for, flowing through it, and wasting in upon it all the divine properties that feed and freshen, empower and impel a really great and complete nature. * * * * There is nothing, in short, but religion, or the life in God, that can be looked to for the completion of a soul.

[Dr. Bushnell.]

“The world is close to our body; God closer to the soul, not only without but within, for the all-pervading current flows into each. The clear sky bends over each man, little or great. Let him uncover his head, there is nothing between him and infinite space. So the ocean of God encircles all men. Uncover the soul of its sensuality, selfishness, sin, there is nothing between it and God who flows into men as light into the air. Certain as the open eye drinks in the light do the pure in heart see God.”

Who is the good man? The religious man only is good. And what is goodness? First and foremost, it is the agreement of the will with the conscience. Who is the great man? He who patiently endures injury and maintains a blameless life,—he is a man indeed.—[Buddha.]

What hath not man sought out and found,
But his dear God? who yet his glorious law
Embosoms in us, mellowing the ground
With showers and frosts, with love and awe,
So that we need not say, Where 's this command?
Poor man! thou searchest round
To find out death, but missest life at hand.

[Herbert.]

Our *reserves* are our strength, our comfort and our joy. Wearied of human misery and stupidity, worn out by watching and laboring in vain, desperate at failure, sick at heart at faithlessness and fraud, we can retire into the fresh, cool, silent chambers of our inner natures, and in the grateful recess of our own verity forget and forgive the hollow, vain, and seemingly profitless round of material things, the sadness and disgust they have occasioned. Here, with lavish splendor, we may build a brighter home; here, with saintly purity, we may win repose through prayer; here we may, with sweet and reverent adoration, bow to the latent goodness we instinctively perceive within ourselves; here we may muse without anxiety upon what may be; strong in a faith all the more bright because unseen by others. As a flower is transplanted into the sunlight from the shade, and thus attains a brighter coloring and a sweeter fragrance, so we in the light of self-communion, which exalts us to the eminence of our finest sensibilities, return to the ordinary level of every-day experience, braver, stronger, and better capable of spreading goodness, comfort and happiness around us.

[The Golden Rule.]

PRAYER BY BISHOP BRADWARDINE.

Thyself, my God, I love, for thyself, above all things. Thyself, for thyself, not for aught else, I always and in all things hitherto seek ; with my heart and whole strength, with groaning and weeping, with continual labor and grief. If thou givest me not thyself, thou givest me nothing. If I find not thyself, I find nothing. If thou deniest me thyself, and that forever, and not for a season, whatever else thou givest me, shall I not always weep with grieving, because I remain ever void and empty ? Shall I not mourn inconsolably ; complain unceasingly ; grieve interminably ? This is not thy wont, God of goodness, of clemency, and of love. Grant therefore, O my gracious God, that in the present life I may ever love thyself, for thyself, above all things ; and in the future world may find thee, and hold thee forever.

O my God, thou wert in my heart, and requiredst nothing but a turning of my mind inward to thee to make me feel thy presence. O Infinite Goodness, thou wert so near, and I ran hither and thither to seek thee, but found thee not. My life was a burden, though my *happiness* was within me. I was poor in the midst of riches, and starving with hunger near a table spread with dainties and near a *continual* feast. O beauty, ancient and new, why did I know thee so late ? Alas ! I sought thee where thou wert not, and did not seek thee where thou wert. It was for want of understanding these words of the gospel : “ The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; neither shall they say, Lo here ! or lo there ! for behold, the KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.” — [Madame Guyon.]

“ Quiet from God ! how beautiful to keep
 This treasure the All-Merciful hath given,
 To feel, when we awake and when we sleep,
 Its incense round us, like a breath from heaven !

“ To sojourn in the world, and yet apart,
 To dwell with God and still with man to feel ;
 To bear about forever in the heart
 The gladness which his spirit doth reveal ! ”

From the constitution of the human mind we see how it is that all great moral natures instinctively turn inwards ; and that by their native thirst for *divine knowledge* are carried to the fountains of *self-knowledge*. There it is in the secret glades of thought and motive that the springs of life arise, and the distinctive lights and shadows of good and ill are seen to play ; and thither is the soul invariably led by the genius of duty. * * * Meditative self-knowledge is the true school of reverence, of sympathy, of hope, and of immovable humility, for there we see, side by side, what we are and what we ought to be ; for there, too, we meet spirit to spirit the Almighty Holiness that lifts us to himself.—[Martineau.]

He stands strong who keeps a pure conscience. He who has cast out the last bosom sin, and said with truth, “ I will strive to give an unreserved obedience to God,” has little to fear in life, and nothing in death. Peace attends him alike in palaces and in dungeons. The only two powers that could greatly mar his peace are his friends,—his conscience and his God.—[E. Peabody.]

Lord, with what courage and delight
I do each thing,
When thy least breath sustains my wings !
I shine and move,
Like those above,
And, with much gladness,
Quitting sadness,
Make me fair days of every night.

[Vaughan.]

O God, it is not to know thee, to regard thee only as an all-powerful being, who gives laws to all nature and who has created everything which we see ; it is only to know a part of thy being ; it is not to know that which is most wonderful and most affecting to thy rational offspring. That which transports and melts my soul is to know that thou art the God of my heart. Thou doest there thy good pleasure. Thou art ever with me,—when I do wrong, reproaching me with the evil which I commit, inspiring me with regret for the good which I have forsaken, and with outstretched arms offering me pardon. I call to my mind all the wonders of nature that I may form some image of thy glory. I ask for knowledge of thee from thy creatures, and I forget to seek for thee in the depths of my own soul where thou ever art. We need not ascend to heaven to find thee ; thou art nearer to us than we are to ourselves.—[Parker.]

God, the great, the holy, is everywhere. It is impossible not to find him. We have him here, out under the broad arch of heaven, and we have him in our own hearts.

[Auerbach.]

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We are free to walk hither and thither on the field of existence ; yet there is on us a divine constraint that is invisible and unfelt, but which guides us in the direction of its own ends. Are there not some positions in which we feel sure that we have been divinely brought ? Sternly we may have been guided into them ; but if divinely, too, then cannot we wait in them, patiently, expectantly, our hands clasped and our eyes on God ?—[Mountford.]

We need the doctrine of a *present* forgiveness of sin, to create in the soul a sense of the *immediate* love of God. We need to feel that God gives us forgiveness *now*,—not that he will give it to us hereafter. We need to be reconciled and made *at one* with him before we can have the strength necessary to enable us to work out our salvation. The New Testament motive is not “Do good *that you may be forgiven*,” but Do good because you *have been* forgiven.—[J. F. Clarke.]

“To carry with us the thought of God in every employment and entertainment of the day,—this is to walk with God. In reading, in study, in working with the hands, in walks and drives, to keep fresh the thought and presence of God, is to bring the divine into our lives.”

“And though we turn us from thy face,
And wander wide and long,
Thou hold’st us still in thy embrace,
O love of God most strong.”

As calls the deep to deep in nature's realm,
The ocean's wave to ocean's wave afar—
The feeblest light that shines, to full-orbed star—
So calls my soul far down in depths unseen,
To Thee, who sit'st above the flood serene—
To Thee, the source eternal pure and bright,
Who givest songs amid the gloom of night—
To Thee, who call'st thine own to heights above,
To infinite, unfathomed, joyous love.

[N. A. Prince.]

To whom shall a man, whom the blessed God has made, look for what he likes best, but to that blessed God? If we have been indeed enabled to see that God is our Father, as the Lord taught us, let us advance from that truth to understand that he is far more than father,—that his nearness to us is beyond the embodiment of the highest idea of father; that the fatherhood of God is but a step towards the Godhood for those that can receive it. * * * Our God, we will trust thee. Shall we not find thee equal to our faith? One day we shall laugh ourselves to scorn that we looked for so little from thee; for thy giving will not be limited by our hoping. * * * * *

Ah, Lord! be thou in all our being; as not in the Sundays of our time alone, so not in the chamber of our hearts alone. We dare not think that thou canst not, carest not; that some things are not for thy beholding, some questions not to be asked of thee. For are we not all thine, utterly thine? That which a man speaks not to his fellow, we speak to thee. Our very passions we hold up to thee, and say, "Behold, Lord! think about us, for thou hast made us."—[McDonald.]

There is a living faith by which a man realizes God as the king of his innermost heart, as the presence and spirit who moves in all his action and all his suffering, as the Father, loving, good and just, who is educating him hour by hour, day by day, into perfection. This is the ennobling faith of life. It is the origin of the highest aspiration, self-devotion and strength. Out of it have arisen the noblest human lives. It is the power of appropriating God.—[Brooke.]

We never keep so true a watch over our ways as when we walk as in God's presence. * * * The realization of God's presence is the one sovereign remedy against temptation. It is that which sustains us, consoles us, and calms us. * * * It is not by constraint or by painful effort that we make real progress. On the contrary, it is simply a question of yielding up our will, of going from day to day whithersoever God may lead us, discouraged by nothing, satisfied with the present moment, thankful to let him do all who has made all, and to leave our own will immovable within his will. How happy is it to abide in this condition! How satisfied is the heart, even though it may lack all else!—[Fenelon.]

God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. Dear as our happiness is to him, there is nothing within us which is more precious in his sight. It is of far less consequence, in any divine estimate of things, how much a man suffers, than *what the man is*.—[Rev. Austin Phelps.]

To attain God, the heart must be lowly.—[Hindu.]

There is a fear of God that has more love than fear,—a fear that has *no* torment. There is an inspiration by which our duties rise up before us, vested in a nobleness like that which touches the landscape for a great painter. * * * In the heart of us all there is a higher thought of life struggling for realization. * * * God hides some ideal in every human soul. At some time in our life we feel a trembling, fearful longing to do some good thing. Life finds its noblest spring of excellence in this hidden impulse to do our best. All at some time cry, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfect,” and *then* the fierce conflict of life begins. * * * There is a temptation in the wilderness that every soul must meet, and faint and stagger under, in some form or other. But here, on the other side, is God,—standing silently at the door all day long,—God, whispering to the soul that to be pure and true is to succeed in life, and whatever we get short of that will burn up like stubble. * * * * Oh, friends ! it is to every man and woman the still, small voice, whispering what at that moment we *must* hear if we will live,—crying on the mount of the beatitudes, “Blessed are the poor, blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”—[Robert Collyer.]

Wouldst thou know where I found the Supreme? One step beyond myself. Behind the veil of self shines unseen the beauty of the loved one.—[Persian.]

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord.

Oh, come and dwell with me,
 Spirit of power within,
 And bring thy glorious liberty
 From sorrow, fear and sin.

The inward, deep disease,
 Spirit of health remove !
 Spirit of perfect holiness !
 Spirit of perfect love.

[C. Wesley.]

He who will persistently follow his highest impulses and convictions, who will trust only these amid noisier claims, and constrain himself to go with them alike in their faintness and their might, shall not find his struggles everlasting ; his wrestlings shall become fewer and less terrible ; the hand of God, so dim to him, and doubtful at the first, shall in the end be the only thing that is clear and sure ; his best impulses shall be his strongest, too.

[Martineau.]

The religious frame of spirit that we most need to gain is, to feel that God is near to us ; that he upholds and blesses us ; that he is near to us always ; that all things are filled with his presence ; that the universe around us is not so much a standing monument as a living expression of his goodness ; that all which we enjoy is not so much benevolence, sending down its gifts from afar to us, as it is the energy of his love working within us.

[Dewey.]

THE WAY OF THE DIVINE LIFE.

Religion is, in the beginning, the learning of God,—hence the great name divine, one learned about God;—truly religion is the blessedness arising from a knowledge of God. Without God we are lonely throughout eternity; but if we have God we are more warmly, more intimately, more steadfastly united than by friendship and love. I am then no longer alone with my spirit. Its first great friend, the Everlasting, whom it recognizes, the inborn friend of its innermost soul, will abandon it as little as it can do itself; and in the midst of the impure or empty whirl of trifles and of sins, in the market-place and the battle-field, I stand with closed breast, in which the Almighty and All-holy speaks to me, and reposes before me like a near sun, behind which the outer world lies in darkness. I have entered into his church, the temple of the universe, and remain therein blessed, devout, pious, even if the temple should become dark, or cold, or undermined by graves. What I do or suffer is as little a sacrifice to him as I can offer one to myself; I love him whether I suffer or not.—[Richter.]

The measure of the love of God is to love without measure.—[Francis of Sales.]

We must not hope to be mowers,
And to gather the golden ears,
Unless we have first been sowers,
And watered the furrows with tears.

It is not just as we *take* it,
This mystical life of ours :
Life's field will yield as we make it,
A harvest of thorns or of flowers.

[Goethe.]

But one thing is worthy to be an aim of life to a reasonable and immortal being. It is “a heart settled upon a thought of wisdom,”—a heart and a life consecrated to God, to truth, to spiritual things. * * * This is the crown of thy manliness, the seal of thy nobility, the talisman of thy peace. Come, if thou hast not done it, and pledge thy life to truth and holiness and love. Come, kindle on thy heart’s altar the flame of a consecrating purpose. Come, fix thy heart upon a thought of wisdom, and bend thy noblest energies to the service of Almighty God, and his law written on thy heart. Then round this living principle shall all pure thoughts, as round a central crystal, arrange themselves in fair and perfect symmetry. A new and higher wisdom shall inspire thee ; new light shall shine upon thee ; new peace shall be thine, and holy hopes ; life shall be ennobled, and a high and divine mission set before thee. This kindling thought shall shine out in thy life, shedding beauty and healing upon others’ pathway. It shall dwell within thee a sanctifying light, to purify thy heart from evil, and fill it with heaven’s exceeding peace.

[Withington.]

There is only one thing that can give significance and dignity to human life, viz., virtuous energy; and this energy is attainable only by energizing. Books and discourses may indeed awaken and arouse you, and perhaps hold up the sign of a wise finger-post to prevent you from going astray at the first start, but they cannot move you a single step on the road. General notions about sin and salvation can do you no good in the way of the blessed life. As in a journey, you must see mile-stone after mile-stone fall into your rear, otherwise you remain stationary; so, in the grand march of a noble life, one paltriness after another must disappear, or you have lost your chance.

[Prof. Blackie.]

Possess my heart, O God, I beseech thee, with a sense of thy greatness and holiness; make me now to consider wisely to whom I am about to speak, even to the purest and greatest spirit, to a being infinitely more lovely than my understanding can conceive. With the eye of my mind set on such majesty and holiness, how can I choose but be filled with the deepest lowliness and self-abasement! Holy Father, thou hast called me that I may be holy, and daily the Holy Spirit pours out grace from heaven upon me. * * * By all that thou hast done for me, how clearly is it shown that holiness alone is the way of life, and that the ways of sin bring down to the chambers of death.

[Leighton.]

Miserable thou art, whosoever thou art or whithersoever thou turnest, unless thou turn thyself to God. Keep thy heart free and lifted up to him.—[Thomas à Kempis.]

There is power enough in religion to save us,—God ever helping it,—if we would let it work within us. It is sufficient to make us happy and blessed, if we would give it a trial. No man ever truly gave it a trial and denied its power. Yes, it is all true,—that which we profess to believe, and do not believe. It is as true as if the whole horizon around us and the whole heaven above us were filled with shapes, with pictures of the solemn and glorious verities of our faith. It is as true that sin in the heart will eat and canker, poison and destroy, as if a man could lay his finger upon the very spot where this awful work is going on. It is as true that the good deed is a glorious and blessed thing, as if when it is done a halo of heavenly light should instantly surround it. It is as true that penitence, purity, humility, goodness, self-sacrifice in the heart, is the divinest joy and glory, as if all the treasures and splendors of the universe drew near and gathered around, to pay it homage. The faith of the heart is a stronger assurance than all the visions of the outward sense. When fortune smiles around me, I may think that I am happy; when sanctity and love breathe within me, I know it. And therefore it is certain and it is evident, that he who believeth shall be saved, shall be blessed in God and in the love of God; and that he who believeth not, must fail of the infinite blessing, the only blessing, the blessing of the beatitudes!—[Dewey.]

Whenever you speak, watch yourself; repentance follows every word which gladdens no heart. Let every thorn which people sow in thy road, bloom in the lustre of thy smiles.—[Persian.]

Thou seest my feebleness ;
 Father ! be thou my power,
 My help and refuge in distress,
 My fortress and my tower !

Give me to trust in thee ;
 Be thou my sure abode,
 My helm and sword and buckler be,
 My Saviour and my God !

Myself I cannot save ;
 Myself I cannot keep :
 But strength in thee I surely have,
 Whose eyelids never sleep.

My soul to thee alone
 For always I commend :
 Thou lovest me, Father, as thine own,
 And lovest to the end.

[Charles Wesley.]

God send us a real religious life, which shall pluck blindness out of the heart, and make us better fathers, mothers, and children ; a religious life that shall go with us where we go, and make every house the house of God, every act acceptable as a prayer !—[Parker.]

Man needs some higher aid than he can get from his intentions, his aspirations, or from the universal human conscience. He who would “ abide ” in truth, strength, and purity, must find the secret springs of these in the Most High.—[Rev. G. Gordon.]

KING ALFRED'S PRAYER.

Lord, thou who has wrought all things worthy, and nothing unworthy, * * * to thee I call, whom everything loveth that can love, both those who know that they love and those who know not what they love ; thou who art the Father of that Son who has awakened and yet wakens us from the sleep of our sins, and warneth us that we come to thee. For every one falls who flees from thee, and every one rises who turns to thee, and every one stands who abides in thee, and he dies who altogether forsakes thee, and he quickens who comes to thee, and he lives indeed who thoroughly abides in thee. Thou who hast given us the power that we should not despont in any toil, nor in any inconvenience, as is no wonder, for thou well rulest, and makest us well serve thee. * * * * Thou hast loosed us from the thraldom of other creatures, and always preparest eternal life for us and preparest us also for eternal life. * * * Hear me, Lord, thy servant ! Thee alone I love over all other things ! Thee I seek ! Thee I follow ! Thee I am ready to serve ! Under thy government I wish to abide, for thou alone reignest.

I do not think it well to dwell too much on our sins. I would repent of them, I would view them in their just wickedness, I would pray God to forgive them ; but to have them perpetually near, to have them fill the imagination, and to tyrannize over the memory, is not well. Rather turn to what is elevating, cheerful, hopeful. We should be like travellers, rather, advancing towards the bright hills, than stopping to reflect on the obstacles we have met.—[Sylvester Judd.]

TO DUTY.

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face.
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
 And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
 And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and
 strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !
 I call thee ; I myself commend
 Unto thy guidance, from this hour ;
 Oh let my weakness have an end !
 Give unto me, made lowly, wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
 The confidence of reason give,
 And, in the light of truth, thy bondman let me live.

[Wordsworth.]

Every sincere wish and prayer for goodness, every earnest attempt to fulfil difficult duty, is sure to help on our spiritual progress, either directly or indirectly. By one road or another, every such effort brings us nearer to God.

[Clarke.]

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

The true evidence of discipleship is knowing God. Other men know something about him. The Christian knows him, has him as a friend. And there is no substitute for this. * * * Whether he says it or not, this is the real account of his experience, that God is revealed in him, and that he begins to be conscious of God. * * He is now conscious not of himself only, but of a certain *otherness* moving in him ; some mysterious power of good that is to him what he is not to himself, a spring of new-born impulse, allowing of new life. * * * What is wanted for us all is this faith in Christ, or faith in God ; for it makes no difference. Thinking and questioning stir the mind about God, faith discerns him, and by it, as the soul's open window, he enters to be discerned.

[Dr. Bushnell.]

The phrase, "the divine life," means the most sacred, exalted, and attuned life possible to human nature. It is an inward happiness and repose of soul. * * * He whose inward action and content are so deep as to leave no aching void in his being, and whose faith is so firm as to relieve him from every fear ; who carries in his breast a fountain of serene rapture, fed by the invisible Divinity, has certainly entered on the sole life that is truly blessed. He who so realizes the presence of the Creator as to turn away from all vileness, and feel himself filled with a peace which no discord can mar, and a filial confidence which rests in the trust of its own immortality,—that man has attained the divine life in all its earthly fullness.—[Alger.]

'The soul that loves can dare all things.

Of heroes and hero-worship we hear much. But there is a spiritual heroism, little known ; that of the man who resolves to conquer himself—hardest of all conquests. Impatience, envy, rage, selfishness, eager for success or sullen at defeat, passions of the flesh and passions of the spirit,—these are his enemies. In the silent depths of the heart, he fights his battle. * * * What he does and what he suffers no man knoweth ; God only knows. Not one bloody day does he fight,—at Waterloo or Yorktown,—and win fame forever ; but all through his life does he wage the war and wins no fame. Not to lift himself to honor, but to forget himself, to still the throbs of self-conscious disquiet and all selfish passion,—this is his endeavor. In the midnight and in the morning, in the throng and in the silent hour, ever is it his holy care and prayer to keep all right within him, to keep all just and true, to keep all pure. Loneliness and neglect and sorrow may be upon his path, even as they were upon the path of Christ.

[Dewey.]

O Lord, I yield unto thy will, and cheerfully embrace what sorrow thou wilt have me suffer. Only thus much let me crave of thee (let my craving, O Lord, be accepted of thee, since even that proceeds from thee)—let me crave, even by the noblest title, which in my greatest affliction I may give myself, that I am thy creature, and by thy goodness (which is thyself) that thou wilt suffer some beam of thy majesty so to shine into my mind that it may still depend confidently on thee.—[Sir Philip Sidney.]

The thoughts of souls that would aspire are all prayer.

Creator, yes ! Thy wisdom and thy word
 Created me ! Thou Source of life and good !
 Thou spirit of my spirit and my Lord !
 Thy light, thy love, in their bright plenitude
 Filled me with an immortal soul, to spring
 Over the abyss of death ; and bade it wear
 The garments of eternal day, and wing
 Its heavenly flight beyond this little sphere,
 Even to its source,—to Thee, its author there.

[Derzhavin.]

Of nothing may we be more sure than this : that if we cannot sanctify our present lot, we could sanctify no other. Our heaven and our Almighty Father are there or nowhere. The obstructions of that lot are given for us to heave away, by the concurrent touch of a holy spirit, and labor of strenuous will ; its gloom for us to tint with some celestial light ; its mysteries are for our worship ; its sorrows for our trust ; its perils for our courage ; its temptations for our faith. Soldiers of the cross ! it is not for us, but for our Leader and our Lord, to choose the field ; it is ours, taking the station which he assigns, to make it a field of truth and honor, though it be the field of death.

[Martineau.]

“ The great secret of spiritual perfection is expressed in the words of Loyola, ‘ Hoc vult Deus ! ’ God wishes me to stand in this post, to fulfil this duty, to suffer this disease, to be afflicted with this calamity, this contempt, this vexation. God wishes this, whatever the world and self-love may dictate,—Hoc vult Deus. His will is my law.”

All doubt comes from living out of habits of affectionate obedience to God. By idleness, by neglected prayer, we lose our power of realizing things not seen. Let a man be religious and irreligious at intervals,—irregular, inconsistent, without some distinct thing to live for,—it is a matter of impossibility that he can be free from doubts. He must make up his mind for a dark life. * * * To gain mastery over self and sin and doubt and fear, that is our calling. * * * Victory is by faith; but, O God, who will tell us what this faith *is* that men speak of as a thing so easy, and how are we to get it? * * * Faith is a deep impression of God's love, and personal trust in it. * * * Let us be in earnest. Let us not mind what is past. Perhaps it is all failure and useless struggle and broken resolves. What then? *Are you in earnest?* If so, though your faith be weak and your struggles unsatisfactory, you may begin the hymn of triumph *now*,—for victory is pledged. “Thanks be to God, who *giveth* us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—[Robertson.]

The essential characteristic of the eternal life in the soul is the love of truth and good, and thus of God who is the true and the good, and of Christ in whom God is manifest. This is the life of the angels, which inspires them in their ministries. It is the heavenly life. * * * He who hath in him the eternal life, though a beggar naked and maimed and blind,—before him heaven's gates open of themselves. He is no stranger there, for the life that is in him finds there its true sphere and companionship.

[E. Peabody.]
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Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting place?

A roof for when the slow dark hours begin?

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?

Those who have gone before.

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?

They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

Of labor you shall find the sum.

Will there be beds for me and all who seek?

Yes, beds for all who come.

[Christina G. Rossetti.]

Take it not grievously if some think ill of thee, and speak that thou wouldest not willingly hear. Thou oughtest to be the hardest judge of thyself, and to think no one weaker than thyself. If thou dost walk spiritually, thou wilt not much weigh fleeting words.

It is no small wisdom to keep silence in an evil time, and in thy heart to turn thyself to God and not to be troubled by the judgment of men. Let not thy peace depend on the tongues of men; for whether they judge well or ill of thee, thou art not on that account other than thyself. Where are true peace and glory? Are they not in God?—[The Silent Hour.]

God's love to us in this world is not a feeble indulgence of our inclinations and humoring of our childish desires, but it is an eternal principle. It dispenses not only smiles and gladness, but, for our good, darkness and frowns ; so that we, in some of its manifestations, call it wrath, though it is still love, perfect and alone. We should pitch our affections, our esteem and effort, on the same holy key, and lift it into the same godlike strain, as we contemplate the condition, and strive for the perfection of ourselves or our fellow-men. We should enter into the sublime sympathy with our Father in the tasks and sufferings he appoints ; in the hard, long scourging he lays on the impenitent and impure, that he may open to them a better fate.

[Dr. Bartol.]

“Whoever can so look into my heart as to tell whether there is anything which I revere, and if there be, what thing it is, he may read me through and through, and there is no darkness wherein I may hide myself. This is the master-key to the whole moral nature. What does a man secretly admire and worship? What haunts him with the deepest wonder? What fills him with the most aspiration? What should we hear in the soliloquies of his most unguarded mind? * * * Every man's highest, nameless though it be, is his ‘living God’; while oftener than we can tell, the being on whom he seems to call, whose history he learned in the catechism, of whom he hears at church—with open ear, perhaps, but with thick, deaf soul,—is his ‘dead God.’ And many a man's worship is ‘an idolatry of self—of himself easy, himself rich, himself grand and famous.’”

I see not a step before me,
 As I tread on another year ;
 But the past is still in God's keeping ;
 The future his mercy will clear,
 And what looks dark in the distance
 May brighten as I draw near.

So I go on, not knowing,—
 I would not if I might ;
 I would rather walk in the dark with God
 Than go alone in the light ;
 I would rather walk with him by faith,
 Than walk alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials
 Which the future may disclose,
 Yet I never have a sorrow
 But what the dear Lord chose ;
 So I send the coming tear back
 With the whispered word, *He knows.*

[Miss Brainard.]

Let a man live on in the Christian spirit, and he will feel the world grow divine about him, and he will say, "Always God was here, though I knew it not." * * * Envy nobody; covet nothing worldly; go quietly about your work, and believe that a man may work at an anvil and be as religious as if it were his office to stand at the altar. * * * Be quiet and do your little duties. Do them for God, be they ever such little things, and then they will become great results. For every godly worker has God a worker together with him.—[Mountford.]

We do not understand the supreme, the unutterable interest embraced in religion, when we think to give less to it than our whole heart. We do not understand our nature, when we think to shuffle off its stupendous charge as most men do. No interest on earth can so ill brook our levity or negligence. What is the matter with life but this? Why is it that so many,—and so many that consider themselves good Christians, too,—are living such a poor, lame, halting life; so ill adjusted to the scene around them; so unhappy amidst craving wants and disturbing passions, and pains of self-reproach, but because they will not give their whole hearts to truth and purity, to goodness and to God?—[Dewey.]

When the love of God has taken possession of the soul, and the whole man is consecrated to his service, life loses its fragmentary character, and one guiding stream seems to run through it. Then all varying and apparently disjointed circumstances and duties find a fixed and appointed place,—and though the surface of things may seem to be ruffled, there is a strong under current that cannot be diverted from its object, but is ever flowing on to its one point, widening and strengthening as it goes, and so mastering all that opposes its progress.—[Maria Hare.]

We never know through what divine mysteries of compensation the Great Father of the universe may be carrying out his sublime plan; and those three words, “God is love,” ought to contain, to every doubting soul, the solution of all things.—[Miss Muloch.]

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
 Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace—
 Believing, where we cannot prove !

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust.
 Thou madest ~~all~~ man; he knows not why ;
 He thinks he was not made to die.
 And thou hast made him. Thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine—
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
 Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
 Our wills are ours to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;
 They have their day, and cease to be.
 They are but broken lights of thee ;
 And thou, O Lord ! art more than they.

We have but faith. We cannot know,
 For knowledge is of things we see ;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee—
 A beam in darkness. Let it grow !

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 But more of reverence in us dwell,
 That mind and soul, according well,
 May make one music, as before,—

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
 We mock thee when we do not fear.
 But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

[Tennyson.]

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The thought that God is love outweighs all other thoughts. How shall we get that love? It is to love with all one's heart here. One grain of earnest, loyal, devoted, unselfish affection, is enough to make the whole world homelike. To love another better than one's self is to begin heaven here. The great lesson of all is that the Father's mansions are within one's own breast. Heaven is here ; the world of hope, anticipation, feeling, is all here. We have it here first, if we have it at all.—[Anonymous.]

I find that it conduces to my mental health and happiness to find out all I can which is amiable and lovable in those I come in contact with, and to make the most of it. It may fall very short of what I was once wont to dream of ; it may not supply the place of what I have known, felt and tasted ; but it is better than nothing. It seems to keep the feelings and affections in exercise ; it keeps the heart alive in its humanity ; and, till we shall be all spiritual, this is alike our duty and our interest.—[Moravian.]

Love for self, sympathy for self, activity for self, do not produce life, or the sense of life ; they produce self-disease, the satiety which consumes, the dreadful loneliness which corrupts the soul, that passionate lust for more, which is itself the unsatisfied worm that eats away the heart. No vivid or exalted sense of individual being can ever fill the heart of man until he escape from the curse of self-involvement, and spread his being over all the world.

[Brooke.]

“One of the sweet old chapters,
After a day like this,—
The day brought tears and trouble,
The evening brings no kiss.

“No rest in the aims I long for,—
Rest and refuge and home ;
Grieved, and lonely and weary,
Unto the Book I come.

“One of the sweet old chapters,—
The love that blossoms through
His care of the birds and lilies
Out in the meadow dew.

“His evening lies soft around them ;
Their faith is simply to be.
Oh, hushed by the tender lesson,
My God, let me rest in thee.”

Great and sacred is obedience. He who is not able, in the highest majesty of manhood, to obey, with clear and open brow, a law higher than himself, is barren of all faith and love. A childlike trust of heart, that can take a hand, and wondering walk in paths unknown and strange, is a prime requisite of all religion. Let the Great Shepherd lead, and by winding ways, not without green pastures and still waters, we shall climb insensibly and reach the tops of the everlasting hills, where the winds are cool and the sight is glorious. * * * To work patiently, in faith and love,—to do, not what we like, but what we revere, confers not liberty only, but power.—[Martineau.]

“There was a time when low, on bended knee,
 With outstretched hand and wet uplifted eye,
 I cried, ‘O Father ! teach me how to die,
 And give me strength death’s awful face to see,
 And not to fear.’ Henceforth my prayer shall be,
 ‘Help me to *live*’ / * * * * *
 We may not shrink from our appointed way,
 Nor pause to rest, however rough the road
 He bids us walk in, therefore let us pray,
 ‘Give us the strength we need to *live*, O God’ !”

I should like to see the man who just attended to his duty and troubled himself about nothing ; who did his own work and did not interfere with God’s. How nobly he would work,—working not for reward, but because it was the will of God ! How happily he would receive his food and clothing, receiving them as the gifts of God ! What peace would be his ! What a sober gayety ! What a friend he would be ! How sweet his sympathy ! His eye being single, his whole body would be full of light. * * * We are like to Him with whom there is no past and future, when we live with large bright spiritual eyes, doing our work in the great present, leaving both past and future to Him, to whom they are ever present, and fearing nothing, because he is our future as much as he is in our past,—partakers thus of the divine nature resting in that perfect All in All. * * * To live carelessly-divine, duty-doing, fearless-loving, self-forgetting lives,—lives in which the good has swallowed up the evil and turned it into good. * * * It is well, and better than well, whatever helps us to know the love of him who is our God.

SPIRITUAL WANTS.

My God, my strength, my hope,
On thee I cast my care,
With humble confidence look up,
And know thou hear'st my prayer.
Give me on thee to wait,
Till I can all things do ;
On thee, almighty to create,
Almighty to renew.

I want a godly fear,
A quick-discerning eye,
That looks to thee when sin is near,
And bids the tempter fly ;
A spirit still prepared,
And armed with jealous care,
Forever standing on its guard,
And watching unto prayer.

I want a true regard,
A single, steady aim,
Unmoved by threatening or reward,
To thee and thy great name.
This blessing above all,
Always to pray, I want :
Out of the deep on thee to call,
And never, never faint.

[Charles Wesley.]

STEPS UP AND AWAY FROM SELF.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long, and is kind ; love enviieth not ; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth : but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. * * * And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is love.

The good man loves all men. He loves to speak of the good of others. Love of man is chief of all the virtues. The mean man sows that himself or his friends may reap ; but the love of the perfect man is universal.—[Confucius.]

The loving service of the weak and wanting is an essential part of the discipline of the Christian life. Some habitual association with the poor, the dependent, the sorrowful, is an indispensable source of the highest elements of character. * * * If we gently take the trembling hand that seeks our guidance and spend the willing care and exercise the needful patience, why, it makes us descend into healthful depths of sorrowful affection, which else we should never reach ; it strips off the thick bandages of self and bids us awake to a life which first reveals to us the deathlike insensibility from which we are emerging.

[Martineau.]

Think what it is not to hate anything but sin ; to be full of love to every creature ; to be frightened at nothing ; to be sure that all things will turn to good ; not to mind pain, because it is our Father's will ; to know that nothing—no, not if the earth was to be burnt up, or the waters come and drown us—nothing could part us from God who loves us, and who fills our souls with peace and joy, because we are sure that whatever he wills is holy, just and good.—[From Adam Bede.]

Every good act is charity. Giving water to the thirsty is charity. Removing stones and thorns from the road is charity. Putting a wanderer in the right way is charity. Smiling in your brother's face is charity. A man's true wealth is the good he does in the world. When he dies, mortals will ask what property he has left behind him ; but angels will inquire, “ What good deeds hast thou sent before thee ? ”—[Mahomet.]

The light of God discovers to us our smallest sins, but we are not thereby discouraged. We walk before him. If we deviate in the least from our path, we hasten to regain our steps, and think only of pressing on more earnestly. * * * If this sincere desire to do in everything that which is most pleasing in God's sight be carried out cheerfully, without being discouraged when we have failed, but beginning afresh, over and over again, bearing with ourselves in our infirmities, because God bears with us, wasting no time in looking back, but forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those which are before, we shall press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Thus shall we gain true liberty.—[Fenelon.]

God is ever *doing* for us, what—be it said reverently—what he cannot speak. As a dear friend can look the love which he cannot utter, so do I read the face of nature; so do I read the record of God's interposing mercy. I feel myself embraced with a kindness too tender and strong for utterance. It cannot tell me how dear to the Infinite Love my welfare, my purity is. Only by means and ministrations, by blessings and trials, by dealings and pressures of its gracious hand upon me, can it make me know.—[O. Dewey.]

The kingdom of heaven is not come even when God's will is our law; it is come when God's will is our will. When God's will is our law we are but a kind of noble slaves; when his will is our will we are free children.

[McDonald.]
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INDIRECT INFLUENCE.

The amount and value of a man's influence, for good or evil, upon the world, will generally depend upon the character of his indirect and unconscious influence. Personal perfection,—the Christian refinement of feelings and sentiments, faithfulness to all the duties of the more private relations we sustain, are inexorably demanded by the Almighty, and by the spirit of Christ's gospel, and demanded the more rigorously because the effect of such fidelity does not end with ourselves, but goes forth and wins results that are precious in the sight of heaven, and which we may never know. The spirit of a person's life is ever shedding some power, just as a flower is steadily bestowing some fragrance upon the air. Do you think that a pure and earnest prayer, in the sacred privacy of home, does not steal through the walls and vivify the atmosphere beyond? Do you doubt that a word of sympathy and a gift of charity, in a desolate chamber, publish a sweet influence upon the frosty air of human selfishness? Such things reveal and confirm character, and make the power of a person's presence who performs them more intense and beneficial. Influence depends less on our activity than on the qualities that lie behind our activity; as the planet attracts not by its motion, but by its weight. If we had lived as we ought to live, and as we might live, a power would go out from us that would make every day a lyric sermon, that should be seen and felt by an ever-enlarging audience.—[T. Starr King.]

“ In obedience and in gratefulness, and the infinite peace of God in the soul of man, is alone deep rest and repose.”

As men and women add year to year of patient and loving service, there writes itself in their hearts and in their faces the language of a divine and eternal life. To the seeing eye, what beauty is there in the faces that have been lined and wrinkled by troubles bravely borne, by the sorrows of other lives shared and lightened, by unconscious heroism and sainthood! How deep is the peace of the heart that, having learned at last to ask nothing for itself, finds that all things are its own. The full consecration, the closest intimation of the enfolding divine life, comes only when love's hand has been taken by death. * * * * As we see drawing to its close a life which shows itself true life by growing and ripening to the last, there lies upon it a mysterious and solemn beauty like that of the close of day. We do not mourn the day that is past. What our eyes look upon is the sunset; but it is the sense as of an unseen sunrise that stills the heart.—[G. S. M.]

Man's wisdom is to seek
 His strength in God alone;
 And e'en an angel would be weak
 Who trusted in his own.

[Cowper.]

So long as we are full of self, we are shocked at the faults of others. * * * Let us think often of our own sins, and we shall be lenient to the sins of others. From every page of the gospel, as St. Augustine says, again and again echo the sweet words of Christ: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest."

[Fenelon.]

Self-forgetfulness in love for others has a foremost place in our ideal of character, and our deep homage as representing the true end of our humanity. We exact it from ourselves, and the poor answer we make to the demand costs us many a sigh; and till we can break the bonds that hold us to our centre, and lose our self-care in constant sacrifice, a shadow of silent reproach lies upon our heart. Who is so faultless or so obtuse as to be ignorant what shame there is, not only in snatched advantages and ease retained to others' loss, but in ungentle words, in wronging judgment within our private thoughts alone; nay, in simple blindness to what is passing in another's mind? Who does not upbraid himself for his slowness in those sympathies which are as a multiplying mirror to the joys of life, reflecting them in endless play?

[A. Peabody.]

Do not measure God's mind by your own. It would be a poor love that depended not on itself, but on the feelings of the one loved. A crying baby turns away from its mother's breast, but she does not put it away till it stops crying; she holds it closer. When I don't feel that I love God at all, I just look up to his love; I say to him, "Look at me; see what state I am in; help me!" Ah, how that makes peace! and the love comes of itself sometimes so strong it nearly breaks the heart.—[McDonald.]

When we are most filled with heavenly love, and only then, are we best fitted to bear with human infirmity,—to live above it and forget its burden.—[Maria Hare.]

The effort to do right does not necessarily lead to the happy, spontaneous and loving practice of goodness. This is to be found not in the law, but in the gospel ; not in the sight of duty, but in the sight of love. It is affectionate, filial gratitude for unbought, unearned mercy. It is the great love of him who has been forgiven much. * * * It comes from the sight of the beauty scattered through the world, the blessed face of nature, the warm and glowing heart of humanity, the infinite adaptations throughout the universe for the comfort, education, and blessing of God's creatures. To look out of ourselves and away from ourselves ; away from our narrow virtues and our small attainments ; away from our dangers, our sinfulness, our folly ; to look wholly away from ourselves, and to gaze constantly at the fullness of beauty and goodness in the creation and providence of God,—will not this touch the cold heart, and moisten the dry eye with a humble and grateful tear?—[J. F. Clarke.]

How often has the truth to be repeated, which Burke urged on Barry, that it is the interest of all of us to be at peace with our fellow creatures, far less for their sake than for our own, and that the only qualities to carry us safely through life are moderation and gentleness, not a little indulgence to others, and a great deal of distrust of ourselves.

[Walter Savage Landor.]

“ Real life in the soul, like real life in the affections, has a dignity of its own which wards off any impertinent touch.”

My soul no more shall strive in vain,
Slave to the world and slave to sin ;
A nobler toil will I sustain,
A nobler satisfaction win.

I will resolve with all my heart,
With all my powers to serve the Lord,
Nor from his precepts ere depart,
Whose service is a rich reward.

Oh, may I never faint nor tire,
Nor wandering leave his sacred ways.
Great God ! accept my soul's desire,
And give me strength to live thy praise.

[Mrs. Steele.]

O God, we belong to thee utterly. We dying men are thy children, O loving Father ! Thou art such a Father that thou takest our sins from us and throwest them behind thy back. Thou cleansest our souls as thy Son did wash our feet. We hold our hearts up to thee ; make them what they must be, O love ! O life of men ! O heart of hearts ! Give thy child courage and hope and peace.

[McDonald.]

If self be denied for the good of others, we receive immensely more than we bestow ; we multiply our avenues of enjoyment ; we are refreshed and gladdened by every stream and rill of beneficent, kind office and genial feeling that flows from our abundance or trickles from our scanty resources ; we have as many fountains of happiness as there are hearts and lives to whose happiness we minister.

[A. Peabody.]

“Under the leadings of circumstance, another name for the Divine guidance, we find ourselves sometimes placed in situations of great trial and perplexity which we might have avoided, but which we did not avoid, and they are situations trying to our virtue and perhaps to our peace. What are we to do? Complaining and self-pity do not help, they rather aggravate. I can see nothing but to accept it as coming directly from the Heavenly Father,—as a divine leading into just the situation he wished to put us. It may be self-denial that is required of us, or a cheerful patience under ungracious or unjust treatment, or a returning of good for evil,—in short, a *love* that hides ‘a multitude’ of the sins of others. It would not be strange, indeed, if we found some especial faults or habits of our own that need correction; some hidden sins thus brought to light which heretofore had been covered up or glossed over. We have more than *one* petition, then, to raise to the Good Father. Self-correction may be the greatest need of all. Surely we can go to him, then, and lay all the case before him, believing heartily that he does not willingly afflict us but for our greatest good. We shall come away from that prayer with a submission that accepts thankfully all his will, and strives to learn the present lesson of it; with a peace and trust that make us conquerors through him who hath loved us.”

Without purity of mind, to what end is the worship of God? Convert thy body into a temple and restrain thyself; give up evil thoughts and see God with thy internal eye. When we know him we shall know ourselves.

[Hindu.]

Uphold me in the doubtful race,
 Nor suffer me again to stray ;
 Strengthen my feet with steady pace
 Still to tread forward in thy way ;
 My soul and flesh, O Lord of might,
 Replenish with thy heavenly light.

Give to mine eyes refreshing tears,
 Give to my heart chaste, hallowed fires,
 Give to my soul, with filial fears,
 The love that all heaven's host inspires,
 That all my powers, with all their might,
 In thy sole glory may unite.

Thee will I love, my strength, my tower,
 Thee will I love, my joy, my crown,
 Thee will I love with all my power,
 In all thy works, and thee alone ;
 Thee will I love till holy fire
 Fills my whole soul with strong desire.

[C. Wesley.]

“ I thank thee, O God, that I may strive to do thy work in the world even when my heart is dry,—lacking the comforting moisture of thy grace ; I thank thee that I may bind myself to thee, even while I am crushed by my sins and short-comings ; that even when I doubt whether the love of God is in me, I may yet press ‘ nearer to thee ! ’ where only the heart can find rest.”

“ Unless above himself he can
 Erect himself, how poor a thing is man.”

Whenever we crucify any appetite, or resist any impulse, or rescue any time or faculty, or strain any reluctant nerve, or whip any torpid muscle, or forego any innocent enjoyment, or encounter any physical peril, or defy fashion and custom, or confront censure and shame for the sake of the moral enlightenment of the ignorant, the guidance and help of the erring, the softening of the impenitent, the encouragement of the struggling, the salvation of the lost, we are partaking of Christ's sufferings and bearing his cross, and this glorious opportunity is not denied to any of us.—[Bellows.]

O hearts of love ! O souls that turn
Like sunflowers to the pure and best,
To you the truth is manifest !
For they the mind of Christ discern
Who lean, like John, upon his breast.

[Whittier.]

The sheltered and protected nooks of life where we dwell border upon unseen and mysterious destinies ; shut out by the thinnest veil, life and death and blessed angels and ministers of doom are close upon us. * * * We yield ourselves up to evil thoughts and suggestions, take counsel of them, listen, and then wonder that we become their victims. Our safety is not chiefly in strength of will, but in cleaving to a holier companionship which shall arouse the better elements of the soul.—[E. Peabody.]

He censures God who quarrels with the imperfections of men.—[Burke.]

We thank thee, Father ! for the past ;
 Forgive each thought and deed of wrong !
On thee e'en now our souls we cast,—
 And thus henceforth may we be strong.
Bless us and ours ! in love be near !
O thou who art the Way, draw near !
 Walk ever at our side.

Then shall the shadows from each heart
 Flee far away like those of night ;
Then peace and joy to life shall start,
 Like flowers that ope with morning bright.
Sun of our souls, bring perfect day !
Chase all our doubts and fears away !
 Be thou our life and light.

[Abby Dwight Woodbridge.]

The soul is made for God, and never finds rest till it returns to him again. When God and the soul meet, there will follow contentment. God, simply considered, is not all our happiness, but God as trusted in, and Christ as we are made one with him.—[Sibbes.]

THE JOY AND PEACE OF RELIGION.

PRAYER BY JOHN HOWE.

Lord, I have viewed this world over in which thou hast set me. I have tried how this and that thing will fit my spirit, and the design of my creation, and can find nothing on which to rest, for nothing here doth itself rest ; but such things as please me for a while, in some degree, vanish and flee as shadows from before me. Lo ! I come to thee, the Eternal Being, the spring of life, the centre of rest, the stay of the creation, the fullness of all things. I join myself to thee ; with thee I will lead my life, and spend my days with whom I aim to dwell forever, expecting, when my little time is over, to be taken up ere long into thy eternity. Amen.

The peace of religion is a conscious harmony with God and creation ; an alliance of love with all beings ; a sympathy with all that is pure and happy ; a surrender of every separate will and interest ; a participation of the spirit and life of the universe ; an entire concord of purpose with its Infinite Original. This is peace, and the true happiness of man.—[Channing.]

He that dwelleth in the sacred places of the Most High,
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

MEDITATION FROM MC DONALD.

The day was one of God's odes, written for men. Would that the days of our human autumn were as calmly grand, as gorgeously hopeful, as the days that lead the aging year down to the grave of winter! If our white hairs were sunlit from behind like those radiance-bordered clouds; if our air were as pure as this, when it must be as cold; if the failing, at last, of longest cherished hopes did but, like that of the forest leaves, let in more of the sky, more of the infinite possibilities of the region of truth, which is the matrix of fact,—we should go marching down the hill of life like a battered but still bannered army on its way home.

I was very unhappy until I sought comfort from the unknown Source of my life. He gave me to understand his Son, and so I understood himself,—knew that I came of God, and was comforted. * * * All my difficulties and confusions have gone on clearing themselves up ever since I set out to walk in that way. My consciousness of life is threefold what it was; my perception of what is lovely around me, and my delight in it, is threefold; my power of understanding things and of ordering my way is threefold also! The same with my hope and my courage, my love to my kind, my power of forgiveness. I cannot but believe that my whole being and its whole world are in process of rectification for me. I say nothing of better things still. To the man who receives such as I mean, they are the heart of life. * * * If I thus find my whole being enlightened and redeemed, and know that therein I fare according to the word of the Man of whom the old story tells, I find that his word and the re-

sult of action founded upon that word correspond and agree, opening a heaven within and beyond me, in which I see myself delivered from all that now in myself is to myself despicable and unlovely. If I can reasonably—reasonably to myself, not to another—cherish hopes of a glory of conscious being divinely better than all my imagination when most daring could invent, a glory springing from absolute unity with my Creator, and therefore with my neighbor ; if the Lord of the ancient tale has thus held word with me, am I likely to doubt much or long whether there be such a Lord or no ?

The Christian hope gives peace and power, by restoring the broken proportions of the mind ; and tranquillizes the restlessness of a spirit unconsciously “ cabined, cribbed, confined.” It is this truthfulness to our best and deepest nature,—the power we receive from it, the *quiet* we find in it,—that gives to the Christian estimate of life its most irresistible persuasion upon the heart. * * * Whoever will reverence the glimpses of his better mind shall find them multiplied ; and even whilst they pass they may be rich in revelations.—[Martineau.]

Never, never do great thoughts come to a man while he is discontented or fretful. There must be quiet in the temple of his soul before the windows of it will open for him to see out of them into the infinite. Quiet is what heavenly powers move in. It is in silence that the stars move on, and it is in quiet our souls are visited from on high.—[Mountford.]

Then said Mercy—
Let the Most Blessed be my guide,
If it be his holy will,
Unto his gate, into his fold,
Up to his holy hill.

And let him never suffer me
To swerve or turn aside
From his free grace and holy ways,
Whate'er shall me betide.

[Pilgrim's Progress.]

If men were self-contained, if they could find within *themselves* all the sources of power and joy, if duty was always plain and strength always equal to the need,—if these things were so adjusted, then we might smile at this sublime trust in the Most High. But life is *not* thus rounded. The strongest has the weakest moments, when all the soul cries out for a hand that is stronger. The wisest falters in decision, and turns, now to a fellow and now to heaven, for light on a hidden way. And above all, the strongest, wisest, purest, are often the most full of unrest and a nervous discontent, which need to be smothered and solaced by a power that is *more* strong and wise and pure. I think that there is no one fact of universal human experience more positive than the fact that man, when he seeks the highest good, finds it in his effort to reach the heart of God, and that he, whoever he be, who consciously turns a doubting face, or a saddened heart, towards the Eternal, finds the wrinkles of doubt effaced, the sadness gladdened, and the sick conscience made quick and whole.—[Rev. Mr. Gordon.]

Easiness of desire is a great enemy to the success of a good man's prayer. It must be an intent, zealous, busy, operative prayer. For, consider what a huge indecency it is that a man should speak to God for a thing that he values not. Our prayers upbraid our spirits when we beg tamely for those things for which we ought to *die*; which are more precious than imperial sceptres, richer than the spoils of the sea or the treasures of Indian hills. * * * Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of our recollection, the seat of our meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest. Prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness. He that prays to God with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate and sets up his closet in the outquarters of an army.—[Jeremy Taylor.]

Let us often repeat the beautiful words, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire in comparison with thee.” There is no need to wait for a time of leisure, in order that we may shut our door and be alone; the moment in which we long for devotion may be also the moment in which we practise it. We have but to turn towards God within our hearts, in simple loving confidence.—[Fenelon.]

Very great is the peace of obedience. When a man has his lot fixed and his mind made up, and his destiny before him, and he quietly acquiesces in that, his spirit is at rest.—[Robertson.]

Quiet, Lord, my froward heart ;
 Make me loving, meek and mild,
 Upright, simple, free from art ;
 Make me as a little child,
 From distrust and envy free,
 Pleased with all that pleaseth thee.

What to-day thou shalt provide,
 Let me as a child receive ;
 What to-morrow may betide,
 Calmly to thy wisdom leave.
 'Tis enough that thou wilt care :
 Why should I the burden bear ?

As a little child relies
 On a strength beyond his own,
 Knows beneath his father's eyes
 He is never left alone,
 So would I with thee abide,
 Thou my Father, Guard and Guide.

[John Newton]

“A quiet state of mind,” says Ruysbroke, “a state of mind free from its own troubled imaginings and operations, is God’s habitation, his *inward kingdom and temple*.” * * The state of mind that is most favorable to that inward kingdom, which is set up by the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is that of inward meekness or quietness. * * The deepest want of man is not a desire for happiness, but a craving for peace ; not a wish for the gratification of every desire, but a craving for the repose of acquiescence in the will of God.—[Upham.]

Sincerity is integrity. It is the perfect trust in Him. It is the self-possession which comes from being possessed with his presence and convicted of duty by his law. It is the centre of gravity falling within ; not without, for perpetual uneasy dependence on somebody's favor, or support, or success, or applause to comfort and stay you up. It is the poise which is peace. What is the grace and glory of any man's or woman's deportment but a certain balance and composure in the features, manners, motion and speech? It is the soul keeping its footing, not amid the accidents of this whirling sphere, but in the divine equity wherein all human justice finds motive and rest, whence the fair final award to every creature will not fail, on which we cast ourselves for suffering solace under whatever ill-treatment, insult, affront, or unreasonable blame.

[Bartol.]

“ Your doctor asks you to be patient and give him time ; and we can hear God asking with the infinite tenderness of his great love, ‘ Be patient and give me time,’—time to work out all the plans of my love for you ; and perfect health and strength and rest shall come. How hard to believe it, and yet we know it is most true. But why he leads his children through such different ways, and trains them in such different schools, he only knows ; and we can only say, ‘ It is my Father’s will—so mine.’ ”

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

I say not, "Shield me, Father, from distress,"
 But "Wake my heart to truth and holiness";
 I ask not that my earthly course may run
 Cloudless,—but humbly, "Let thy will be done."
 The peace the world can give not, nor destroy,
 The love which is the greatest, and the joy
 That's given to angels,—to perceive and own,
 That all thy will is light and truth alone,
 These, and such as these
 Be mine. Do thou my steps control,
 Erect devotion's temple in my soul,
 And there, my God! my King! unrivalled sway;
 So let existence, like a Sabbath day,
 Glide softly by, and let that temple be
 A shrine devoted all to truth and Thee.

[Bowring.]

"If an abiding belief in the supremacy of conscience is the only safe guide in life; if there is no true peace but in oneness with goodness—no satisfying of the demands of our nature but in the practices of a holy life,—no possibility of a hearty, appreciative enjoyment of the earthly *home* even, till we come to live self-denying lives in it, then is religion a necessity of our being and *goodness* the only hope for the human soul."

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Life is felt to be a great and gracious boon by all who enjoy its light ; and this is not too much felt. It is the wonderful creation of God ; and it cannot be too much admired. Yes, life, despite of all that cynics or sentimentalists say, is a great and glorious gift. There is gladness in its infant voices. There is joy in the buoyant step of its youth. There is deep satisfaction in its strong maturity. There is holy peace in its quiet age. There is good for the good ; there is virtue for the faithful ; there is victory for the valiant. There is spirituality for the spiritual ; and there is, even in this humble life, an infinity for the boundless in desire. There are blessings upon its birth ; there is hope in its death ; and there is—to consummate all—there is eternity in its prospect.—[Dewey.]

Animate us to cheerfulness. May we have a joyful sense of our blessings, learn to look on the bright circumstances of our lot, and maintain a perpetual contentedness under Thy allotments. Fortify our minds against disappointment and calamity, preserve us from despondency, from yielding to dejection. Teach us that no evil is intolerable but a guilty conscience, and that nothing can hurt us if with true loyalty of affection we keep Thy commandments and take refuge in Thee.—[Channing.]

Rest of rests ! O peace serene, eternal !
Thou ever livest, and thou changest never ;
And in the secret of thy presence dwelleth
Fullness of joy, for ever and for ever.

[H. B. Stowe.]

Out of the silent loneliness of the heart, the prayer of confession rises to the Fatherhood of God. The weight is lifted off the soul. We have told it all to him. He knew it, it is true,—what was the need of telling him? No need, to him, but comfort to us,—for expression gives relief to tortured feeling. As long as we kept it, brooded over it, it was like the air in a sealed room; expressed, it was like the same air when, the windows thrown open, the sweet spring breeze came flowing in; we rise up, half the weight of the secret pain is lifted off; we begin to feel ashamed of having despaired of life; we begin to feel the duty of forgetting sin and pressing forward into the work of righteousness. This is the blessed work of prayer to God,—of simply intrusting to him, all.—[Brooke.]

“O Lord, my God, do thou thy holy will :
I will lie still,—
I will not stir lest I forsake thine arm
And break the charm
That lulls me, clinging to my Father’s breast,
In perfect rest.”

“Who that ever loved another being with a true and self-forgetting love, who that knew what it was to gain self by giving self away, could not see in Christ’s demand for self-denial and self-surrender the secret of human perfection and blessedness?”

I think that, in life, not to be cheerful, is to blaspheme against God.—[Mountford.]

Arise, arise, good Christian !
 Let right to wrong succeed ;
 Let penitential sorrow
 To heavenly gladness yield,—
 To the light that hath no evening,
 That knows nor moon nor sun,
 The light so new and golden,
 The light that is but one.

* * * * *

Brief life is here our portion,
 Brief sorrow, short-lived care ;
 The life that knows no ending,
 The tearless life, is there.
 Oh happy, holy portion,
 Refection for the blest,
 True vision of true beauty,
 Sweet cure of all distrest !
 Strive, man, to win that glory,
 Toil, man, to gain that height ;
 Send hope before to grasp it,
 Till hope be lost in sight.

[The Celestial Country.]

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

“ In the thought of God alone is sovereign strength and sacred calmness.”

Our faith teaches us that our only Lord is goodness it-self impersonated ; that we are his by birthright and by nature,—his as the child belongs to its parent,—his as a man's thoughts are his own. We are each of us thoughts of God. We owe our being to *having been* in that infinite mind. * * * We then, I conceive, are justified in holding clearly and boldly, as the very core of our faith, that God loves eternally and unalterably every creature he has made ; and that our sin, while it draws a thick veil over our eyes and makes it impossible to give us the joy of communion with him, yet never changes him, never blackens that sun of love in the heavens.—[F. P. Cobbe.]

The best will is our Father's will,
And we may rest there calm and still :
Oh ! make it hour by hour thine own,
And wish for naught but that alone
Which pleaseth God.

[Paul Gerhardt.]

SINNING AND SORROWING.

Look down in pity, Lord, we pray,
On eyes oppressed by moral night,
And touch the darkened lids, and say
The gracious words, "Receive thy sight."

[Bryant.]

What creed can be more to me than this: that God pities me; that God careth for me; and that to me, a wanderer from his presence and love, he hath sent forth his Son, "to bring me nigh to him"? Nigh to him! shelter, protection, peace, joy, blessedness; all, and more than all that words can utter, is summed up in this. The bright realm of heaven that overwhelmed me with its awful majesty, melts and dissolves in dews of mercy upon my thirsting and fainting nature.—[Dewey.]

It is a great thing to feel, in our human sorrows, that it is not fate that is trying us; not necessity that is compelling us, but our dear *Father* who is dealing with us, working out for us his good ends. It is the sublimest power man ever puts forth, to be able to say, "Not my will, but thine, be done." When we can say it in the spirit in which Christ said it, and can let it work in us as it worked in him, we are the conquerors of the world.

[Lathrop.]

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There are two ways of looking at every occurrence,—a bright and a dark side. Two modes of action. Which is most worthy of a rational being, a Christian and a friend? It is absurd for a rational being to torture one's self unnecessarily. It is inconsistent in a Christian to see God's wrath rather than his mercy in everything. How to avoid all morbidity of mind? By prayer. Resist the devil, etc. By turning away from the dark view. Never begin to look darkly at a subject without checking yourself and saying, "Is there not a bright side to this? Has not God promised the bright side to me? Is not my happiness in my own power? Do I not know that I am ruining my own mind and perhaps endangering the peace of others dear to me, by looking at the wrong side?"

[Charles Kingsley.]

Look at this inward being, and say, what is it? Formed by the Almighty hand, and therefore formed for some purpose; built up in its proportions, fashioned in every part by infinite skill; an emanation, breathed from the spirit of God; say, what is it? Its nature, its necessity, its design, its destiny; what is it? So formed it is, so builded, so fashioned, so exactly balanced, and so exquisitely touched in every part, that sin introduced into it is the direst misery; that every unholy thought falls upon it as a drop of poison; that every guilty desire, breathing upon any delicate part or fibre of the soul, is the plague spot of evil, the blight of death. Made, then, is it for virtue, not for sin; oh! not for sin, for that is death; but made for virtue, for purity as its end, its rest, its bliss; made thus by God Almighty.—[Dewey.]

Times without number have I prayed,
“ This only once forgive,”
Relapsing when thy hand was stayed
And suffered me to live.

Yet now the kingdom of thy peace,
Lord, to my heart restore ;
Forgive my vain repentances
And bid me sin no more.

[Cowper.]

Let us come to our Father with meekness and humility, in penitence and sorrow, and say : I have sinned, O God, I have sinned against thee, and am not worthy to be called thy child. But do thou have mercy upon me. Remember not against me the transgressions of my youth and the follies and sins of my whole life, but have mercy upon me. Cleanse me from mine iniquities and make me holy. I would give myself up to thee. I would submit to whatever thou mayest appoint. I would obey thee. Cast me not away. O thou who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, take pity upon me and save me from my sins. O Lord, lift us up and lead us in the way of life. Make us to know thy great salvation. Quicken us by thine Holy Spirit, and breathe into our hearts newness of life, that as in time past we have lived unto the world, so in time to come we may live to God.—[M. B. J.]

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction ; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

It may be that in your conscious weakness you have lost hope,—that in your failures it has seemed as if you could no longer look for God's mercy or help ; and yet at that moment, could we but understand it, (and what shall we say of ourselves when our minds are closed against this sublimest truth?) heaven is looking down upon us with tender interest. God cares for everything that he has created ; but on the whole earth nothing is so interesting to heaven as the fidelity of the soul, the fidelity of a weak heart and feeble will, endeavoring to overcome temptation. All the glory of earth is pale and faded beside the persevering struggles of such a soul.—[E. Peabody.]

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness : according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thine holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Eternal self-communion is our destiny. Shall it be communion with selves that we must abhor or despise, or with selves into which we can look with gratitude and gladness?—[A. Peabody.]

O God, whose dread and dazzling brow
 Love never yet forsook !
 On us who seek thy presence now,
 In deep compassion look.

Aid our weak steps and eyesight dim,
 The paths of peace to find,
 And lead us still to learn of him
 Who died to save mankind.

For many a frail and erring heart
 Is in thy holy sight,
 And feet too willing to depart
 From the plain way of right.

Yet, pleased the humble prayer to hear,
 And kind to all that live,
 Thou, when thou seest the contrite tear,
 Art ready to forgive.

[Bryant.]

A true simplicity of heart, the inward calm which arises from surrendering one's self wholly to the will of God ; that patience with the faults of others which is inspired by the thought of God's presence ; a childlike readiness to acknowledge our own faults and to accept blame ; such are the virtues needed in the Christian character.—[Fenelon.]

There is a transcendent power in example. We reform others unconsciously, when we walk uprightly.

[Mme. Swetchine.]

By my very sorrows, I know that God loves me ; I say not whether with approbation, but with an infinite kindness, an infinite pity. What *I* need is but to *feel* it, to pray for that feeling, to meditate upon all that should bring that feeling into my heart ; to take refuge amidst my sorrows in the assurance that God loves me ; that he does not willingly grieve or afflict me ; that he chastens me for my profiting ; that he could not show so much love for me by leaving me unchastened, untried, undisciplined. * * * Great is the faith that must save us. It is a faith in the Infinite ; a faith in the infinite love of God ! * * * * Creature of God's love ! believe in that love which gave thee being. Believe in that love which every moment redeems thee from death, and offers to redeem thee from the death eternal. Believe in God's love, and be wise, be patient, be comforted, be cheerful and happy—be happy in time ; be happy in eternity !—[Dewey.]

That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst thou not hear and answer prayer ;
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load.

[Cowper.]

That I can pray “God help me !” is a proof that he will help me. Because a prayer can be prayed at all, there is certainly a divine ear to hear it. It is because I can call upon God in the day of trouble, that I am sure there is help for me somehow or somewhere, under providence.—[Euthanasy.]

“OUR OWN.”

If I had known in the morning
How nearly all the day
The words unkind
Would trouble my mind,
I had been more careful, darling,
Not given you needless pain ;
But we vex “our own”
With look and tone
We might never take back again.

For though in the quiet evening
You may give me the kiss of peace,
Yet it might be
That never for me
The pain of the heart should cease.
How many go forth in the morning,
That never come back at night !
And hearts have broken
For harsh words spoken,
That sorrow can ne'er set right.

We have careful thoughts for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest,
But oft for “our own”
The bitter tone,
Though we love “our own” the best.
Ah ! lips with the curve impatient,
Ah ! brow with look of scorn,
’Twere a cruel fate.
Were the night too late
To undo the work of morn.

[Margaret E. Sangster.]

We are so tried and tossed, so compassed round with pain, so much, apparently, the sport of fanciful passions, so curiously framed, as it were, for temptation, with high aspirations living in us, along with base desires ; so hovering ever on the verge of good and ill, so weak to choose the good ; so troubled by the necessity of battle, when our heart is weary with the passionate longing for rest ; so sick of ourselves and of the vile cravings that at times possess us,—that God knows we do want some sympathy higher than any one on earth can give us—some sympathy which will not weaken but strengthen, some certainty that the eternal love and righteousness can feel with us and assist us. Therefore it is the deepest blessedness to know that one who shared in our nature was, in the days of his flesh, partaker of “our strong crying and tears,” and “learned obedience by the things which he suffered,” for then we know that he can, in his triumphant nature, be still “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.”

[Robertson.]

Since God has throned conscience in the human soul, no man can violate its dictates and still escape its scourge and sting without repentance and reformation. * * * When God prohibits men from doing wrong, remorse comes of itself,—sometimes earlier, sometimes later ; but always it will come, and with more terrible avengings the longer it delays. * * * The righteous martyr at his stake enjoys more and suffers less than the sinner on a throne.—[Horace Mann.]

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.

“Gracious spirit, love divine,
Let thy light within me shine ;
All my guilty fears remove ;
Fill me with thy heavenly love.

“Let me never from thee stray ;
Keep me in the narrow way ;
Fill my soul with joy divine :
Keep me, Lord, forever thine.”

“Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. Oh ! may the doubts which have rendered our hands weak disappear. Though we judge and misjudge, thou makest no mistakes. By the thought of thee, grant that we may walk in the strength of God day by day ; that in the storm we may have thee as a pavilion under which we may find shelter ; that when pursued by persecution we may have thee as a tower in which to take refuge. When we are wandering and homeless and forsaken and discouraged, may we reflect that in our Father’s house there are many mansions, and may all things end in praises for thee and rejoicings for us ! In the battle of life may we not be left to our baser natures, to our lower thoughts, to the misinterpretations of men, but, whether in sunshine or gloom, grant us the greatest of all blessings,—an inbearing of God present.”

I doubt if you can yet tell what it is to know the presence of the living God in and about you. * * * But believe me that, in any case, however much a man may have of it, he may have it endlessly more.—[McDonald.]

“Forsake me not, my God,
 Thou God of my salvation ;
 Give me thy light to be
 My sure illumination.
 My soul to folly turns,
 Seeking she knows not what ;
 Oh, lead her to thyself :
 My God ! forsake me not.

“Forsake me not, my God,
 Take not thy spirit from me,
 And suffer not the might
 Of sin to overcome me.
 A father pitieh
 The children he begot :
 My Father, pity me ;
 My God, forsake me not.

“Forsake me not, my God,
 Thou God of life and power ;
 Enliven, strengthen me,
 In every evil hour.
 And when the sinful fire
 Within my heart is hot,
 Be not thou far from me,—
 My God, forsake me not !

“Forsake me not, my God ;
 Uphold me in my going,
 That evermore I may
 Please thee in all well doing ;
 And that thy will, O Lord,
 May never be forgot,

In all my works and ways,
My God, forsake me not !

“Forsake me not, my God ;
I would be thine forever ;
Confirm me mightily
In every right endeavor.
And when my hour is come,
Cleansed from all stain and spot
Of sin, receive my soul ;
My God, forsake me not !”

“That I can suffer when I sin, that I can sorrow for the wrong that is in me, that I can sigh and struggle to be free from it,—I am glad of that. Were it not for this moral nature, this conscience, all were wrecked ; but it exists, it is strong, it works mightily in the human heart. I know not *who* makes it suffer and sorrow and struggle as it does, but God. It seems to me that all institutions, all preachings, all machinery of human device, are weak, compared with this all-pervading power of God that works within us.”

No man is more miserable than he who hath no adversity ; that man is not tried whether he be good or not ; and God never crowns those virtues which are only faculties and dispositions ; but every act of virtue is an ingredient into reward. God so dresses us for heaven.

[Jeremy Taylor.]

Oh help us when our spirits bleed
With contrite anguish sore ;
And when our hearts are cold and dead,
Oh help us, Lord, the more !

[Milman.]

There are several virtues and graces, such as courtesy, charity, mercy, which are comprehended under the name of family kindness ; and the true glory of kindness consists not so much in some signal acts of generosity or charity as in those kind offices and unpretending services of love, whose constant influence is like a healthy atmosphere, un-seen, yet indispensable to our happiness. It consists in those “sweet small courtesies of life, which sweeten the cup of existence as we drink it.”—[Dr. Follen.]

ENTREATIES HEAVENWARD.

Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

If there be any goodness and loveliness in the world ; if there be anything dear and delightful in the excellence of good men ; if heaven from its majestic heights, if earth from its lowly beauty sends one sweet or one sublime thought into your mind,—think that this is a manifestation of the ever beautiful, ever blessed perfections of God,—think for ever ! that the whole universe of glory and beauty is one revelation of God.—[Dewey.]

How gentle God's commands !
How kind his precepts are !
Come, leave your burdens to the Lord,
And trust his constant care.

His bounty will provide !
Ye shall securely dwell !
The hand that bears creation up
Shall guard his children well.

Oh, why should anxious thought
Press down your weary mind ?
Come, seek your Heavenly Father's face,
And peace and gladness find.

His goodness stands for all,
Unchanged from day to day :
We'll drop our burden at his feet,
And bear a song away.

[Doddridge.]

There are some griefs, some passionate moral struggles, some fatal secrets of the inner life which we cannot speak to man. For we cannot give men that knowledge of our whole past, by which alone its secrets can be justly judged. But to our Father, who knows all, we can speak out. He has no conventional maxims by which to measure us ; no half-experience ; no harshness ; no jealous injustice, such as among men demands to be considered love. He cannot therefore mistake us,—we are sure of justice ; and it is that, and not love *alone*, which we ask from him, if our souls be true.—[Brooke.]

Christian perfection demands that we should belong to God, from the very depth of our hearts. As soon as we thus belong to him, all that we do for him becomes easy. God's children are always satisfied when their love is undivided, for they desire all that God pleases ; they forsake all, and thereby receive a hundred fold. Peace, liberty of heart, the sweetness of abandoning one's self wholly to God, and of resting in his hands ; the joy of seeing his light ever growing within one's heart ; freedom from the tyrannical constraints of the age in which we live,—all these things constitute the abundant happiness of God's children. Blessed is he who thus yields himself to God !

[Fenelon.]

“ Why should we live in darkness when we may have the light of life ? The scriptures teach us to ‘ lay hold on eternal life.’ We must not, then, wait for inspirations. We must be spiritually minded, or we have no life and peace. Necessity is laid on us,—the needs of the soul that pines and dwindle when the life tends earthward ; the demands of the better nature, that is satisfied only when it comes near to God, its source ; and conscience, with its admonitions and stings, which gives no rest till we seek peace in him. ‘ To be carnally minded is death ; to be spiritually minded is life and peace.’ ”

Only let us love God, and then nature will compass us about like a cloud of divine witnesses. Only let there be God within us, and then everything outside us will become a godlike help.—[Euthanasy.]

Oh, draw me, Father, after thee,
So shall I run and never tire ;
With gracious words still comfort me,
Be thou my hope, my sole desire,
Free me from every weight, nor fear
Nor sin can come if thou art near.

[J. Wesley.]

Amid the fatigues of life's incessant struggle, refreshment is instantly gained when we ascend to the fountain of all affection, and touch the parching lips with the draft of life. In temptations to unfaithfulness, witnessed by no human eye, let us but say, " Ah ! Lord, but thou art there," and that failing purpose springs to its feet again.

When in higher moments, brought by the sorrows of life, the tension of duty or the silence of thought, you catch some faint tones of a voice diviner than your own, know that you are not alone, and *who* it is that is with you. Stay not in the cold monologue of solitary meditation, but fling yourself into the communion of prayer. * * Learn to *distrust* the suggestions of lower and more earthly hours, and scatter the fears of the slothful and unawakened heart, to court and not to shun the bursts of holy suspicion that break through the crust of habit and the films of care, and accept them as a glance from the eye of the Infinite.—[Martineau.]

Never cherish a thought of which thou oughtest to be ashamed ; never utter a word for which thou wouldest have to ask God's pardon.—[Persian.]

Loving God is but letting God love us,—giving welcome, that is to God's love, knowing and believing the love God hath to us. * * * But all men living in sin repel or draw back from the love of God, and will not let it come in upon them. It seems impossible that a truth so glorious for man, so grandly luminous, one that raises him so high as that God, the infinite Father, loves him, loves the world that is made for him, flames all round the sky, as a circle of day by his love; it seems impossible that such and so great a creature will not be so great, and will not let God love him. Yet it is so. * * * Is there any tenderly-doubting one, groaning under the burden of his sins and the bondage of his evil life,—what has he to do for deliverance? What but to simply know and believe the love God hath to him? This do, and he is free. * * * O thou sorrowing, dejected, fainting! believe, and thy burdens are gone forever.

[Dr. Bushnell.]

If, from this often-deceiving, and ever-changing and fleeting world, we may draw and fix within us one thing which is sure and steadfast and immovable and always abounding; one feeling that is assurance and sufficiency and victory, a happiness in wisdom, in love and in God, which is, we know, in its very nature everlasting, which, we feel, will never desert us, will never let us be unhappy, go where on earth, go where in heaven we will; what a prize, to bear away from a struggling life and from the battling world, is this! Who does not say, "Thanks be to God"?—[O. Dewey.]

RAIN AFTER DROUGHT.

God of my life, as God of all beside,
 This lovely wonder which thy hand hath wrought,
 Quickens in thought the mercies manifold,
 Which thy great love into my soul hath brought.

For I have lain, full oft, as hot and dry
 As ever earth in summer's fiercest hour ;
 And the long days, slow creeping over me,
 Brought me no tokens of thy gracious power.

Then at thy word, down fell thy spirit rain ;
 I felt its coolness all my being through ;
 Made fresh and clean and joyous every whit,
 I heard the whisper, "I make all things new."

But mine, alas ! was not the holy faith
 The parched earth felt, through all her thirsty hours !
 I was in fear that never more again
 Should I be quickened by the heavenly powers.

So shall it be no more ; but though I lie
 For many days as one thou dost forget,
 Recalling this glad hour, my heart shall say,
 "I know 'twill come ; he never failed me yet."

[Chadwick.]

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth ; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty, for he maketh sore and bindeth up, he woundeth and his hands make whole.

Teach me thy way, O Lord : I will walk in thy truth.

The spiritual Christ is waiting to be born into the heart of the world. * * * Humanity does not yet long for him. * * * But he is born wherever love unfeigned is found ; born into every heart that sincerely and tenderly suffers and labors for humanity ; born in every peacemaker's spirit ; born in every soul that rises above the power of selfishness and worldly greed, and uses its means and powers to promote the good of mankind ; born where humility, gentleness, purity of body and soul, trust and submission, faith, hope and charity are seen to dwell. * * Yes ! Christ comes only to the want of the soul. We shall know him, love him, feel his saving power, the glory and the blessedness of his birth in our souls, only when we heartily desire him ; when all we have seems poor ; and all we are, weak ; and all we hope, uncertain and uninviting. Then, when with eager expectation, with sincere longing, with soul-wrung desire we wait for him, he will come in the sweetness and beauty of his innocence,—ay, in the power and plenitude of his truth.—[Bellows.]

Banished from the companionship and peace of heaven, ignorant of the blameless complacency that flows through its worshipping ranks, driven by restless desires, defiled with sin, prostrate in weakness and tears, we should lift our better longings towards this eternal ideal haunting the heights of conscience and imagination, and cry, Father, teach us what is the true life, and show us the way to it !

[Alger.]

Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

I love, and have some cause to love, the earth—

She is my Maker's creature, therefore good ;
She is my mother, for she gave me birth ;

She is my tender nurse, she gives me food ;
But what's a creature, Lord, compared with thee,
Or what's my mother or my nurse to me ?

Without thy presence, wealth is bags of cares ;

Wisdom but folly ; joy disquiet, sadness ;
Friendship is treason, and delights are snares ;
Pleasures but pain, and mirth but pleasing madness ;
Without thee, Lord, things be not what they be,
Nor have their being when compared with thee.

[Francis Quarles.]

“ While I was speaking,” the prophet says, “ Gabriel, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me, and said, ‘ O Daniel, at the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee ; for thou art greatly beloved.’ ” What greater vividness could be given to the reality of prayer ? No sooner do the words of supplication pass out from the lips than the command is given to one of the presence angels, “ Go thou.” And he flies swiftly to the prostrate suppliant and touches him bodily, and assures him that his desire is given to him. “ I am come to thee, O man greatly beloved ; I am commissioned to instruct and to strengthen thee. * * * * From the first day that thou didst set thy heart to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard ; and I am come because of thy words. Again I say, O man greatly beloved ! fear not ; peace be unto thee ; be strong, yea, be strong.”—[The Still Hour.]

GOD MADE US TO BE HOLY.

It is not for us to despair of growing, not merely pure, but good ; not merely good, but holy. God has made us for that very thing ; and what God intends, *that* assuredly will at last be done. He is not wearied of us ; it is we who are weary of our vain and vacillating selves. I cannot use the accustomed phrase, that “ he will forgive us if we pray.” He is *always* forgiving. He stands by every hour, watching all our poor struggles, with pity and love ineffable, longing—yes ! I believe we may dare to say it—longing for our return, that he may bless us once more with the consciousness of his love, the sense of reunion with his holiness, the infinite, immeasurable, awful joy of giving ourselves to be his, in soul and body on earth,—his to do his holy will in worlds beyond the grave, forever and forever.

Father, blessed Father ! take us thus back ! From all our wanderings, our coldness, our miserable guilt and rebellion, our baseness and our sin, redeem us, O God ! Father, we love thee,—only a little now ; but we shall love thee hereafter wholly and perfectly. Take our hearts and mould them to thyself. We give them to thee. That which thou desirest for us, even the same do we desire. Fulfil thy blessed purpose in us. As thou hast made us to be pure and good, so burn thou out of our souls all our sinfulness. As thou hast made us to be strong and holy, so do thou strengthen us with might, by thy spirit in the inner man. Show us all the depth of the evil, the sensuality, the bitterness of heart, the coldness towards thee in which we have lived, and the glory and beauty and blessing of the life of love to thee and to our fellows, which it

is in our power yet to live. Lift us out of the pit, out of the mire and clay, and set our feet upon a rock, and order all our goings. We are thine, O Father and Mother of the world ! We are thine : save us ! We know that thou *wilt* save !—[Frances Power Cobbe.]

O God ! the centre of all pure spirits, the Everlasting Goodness, we come to thee. Thou art the happiness of heaven ; and thy presence, felt by the soul that communes with thee, is the highest good. Ignorant of thee, we know nothing aright ; wandering from thee, we lose all light and peace ; forgetting thee, we turn our minds from the noblest object of thought ; and without love to thee, we are separated from infinite loveliness, and from the only substantial and sufficient source of joy. Thou hast an inexhaustible fullness of life ; and thine unceasing communications take nothing from thy power to bless. Thou art infinitely better than all thy gifts, and through all we desire to rise to thee. * * * Be thou the centre, life, and sovereign of our souls !—[Dr. Channing.]

The burden of the sublimest of the hymns of the ages is this great solemn assurance, that however great the need, however sad the sorrow, however shameful the fear, above the need and within the sorrow and around the fear is the strong sense of the Everlasting Love. Humanity would stand shivering and shuddering on the brink of each new morning, if it were not for this thought of the majestic presence of the Eternal Light.—[Rev. G. Gordon.]

“Send kindly light amid the encircling gloom,
And lead me on !

The night is dark and I am far from home :
Lead thou me on !

Keep thou my feet ; I do not ask to see
The distant scene ; one step’s enough for me.

“I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on !

I loved to choose and try my path ; but now
Lead thou me on !

I loved day’s dazzling light, and spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will : remember not past years.

“So long thy power hath blessed me, surely still
Twill lead me on !

Through dreary doubt, through pain and sorrow, till
The night is gone ;

And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.”

We are so liable to be unreal in our devotions, to have no overshadowing consciousness of the awful Being, awful in his goodness even more than in his power, awful in his nearness and in his mysterious connection with us, to whom we are about to speak, that we come not to know that it is an act of the highest irreverence to dare to speak to God without first carefully drawing nigh to him, and seeking by collectedness of being to be penetrated through and through by a sense of what he is. “Exalt him as much as ye can ; for even yet will he far exceed : and when ye exalt him put forth all your strength and be not weary ; for ye can never go far enough.”—[Thom.]

There is nothing so remarkable about man as his improbableness. Shall not he who improves everything else, improve himself? Shall not he who out of rude logs can frame a graceful ship, or from rough stones erect a shapely temple, or from the coarse ore of the mine melt out the iron, the silver and the gold, which he forges, shapes, and polishes into the art and beauty of the world; shall he have no power to fashion himself as he will, to purge out his own dross, to hew away his own knots and splinters, to build up his own being? Shall man be the miner of the earth, and not explore his own soul; the subduer of the forest and the sea, and not subjugate himself; the sculptor of adamant and the liquefier of iron, and not the shaper of his own will; the architect of pyramid and cathedral, and not the designer and builder of his own character? * * * The powers of nature are dull scholars beside the powers of humanity. You can, if you will, do anything, everything good and right, noble and glorious, with your nature and character. And, believe me, God will not let you do anything else, without solemn and painful remonstrance! * * * All your sorrows, trials, misfortunes, sufferings, are his protests against your folly, obduracy, or shortness of sight! Oh, how worse than wasted are a thousand human lives, all whose powers have been exhausted upon a resistance to the divine model of a human life!—[Dr. Bellows.]

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

LISTENING FOR GOD.

I hear it often in the dark,
I hear it in the light,—
Where is the voice that calls to me
With such a quiet might?
It seems but echo to my thought,
And yet beyond the stars ;
It seems a heart-beat in a hush,
And yet the planet jars !

Oh, may it be that far within
My inmost soul there lies
A *spirit-sky*, that opens with
Those voices of surprise !
And can it be, by night and day,
That firmament serene
Is just the heaven where God himself,
The Father, dwells unseen ?

[W. C. Gannett.]

There are those to whom sin is a burden. Penitent hearts there are who desire to forsake evil, but who fear God, and who know so well that the next hour they may fail and fall, that they hardly dare to pray for help in their weakness,—whose good desires are palsied by discouragement. * * * Such there are, and many such, frail, timid, self-reproachful, self-distrustful, with good desires but infirm wills, who have lost heart and hope, and are perishing for want of encouragement. To such come the words of Jesus as words of life, “Be not fearful, but believing; come, follow me, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”—[E. Peabody.]

In the cultivation of a devotional spirit, it is not safe to trust to prayers and meditations *alone*. Many wise and good men, in their writings, have recommended that the most special heed be given to those visitations of tender and solemn emotion, those touches of holy sensibility, those breathings of the Spirit of all grace, which steal into the heart unsolicited, and offer their heavenly aid unsought. Let not him who would catch the sacred fervor of piety, venture to neglect these gracious intimations. Let him not neglect to put himself in the way of receiving them. Let him not willingly invade the holy Sabbath hours with business or pleasure, or forsake the assemblies where good men meditate and pray, or resist the touching signs of nature's beauty or decline, or turn away from the admonition of loneliness and silence, when they sink deep into the heart.—[Dewey.]

God is love ! Of no attributes save this of love is there in the scriptures such intense and vehement expression, to signify that this is the sublime, paramount, crowning fact of the Godhead ; as though this were his whole nature, and all other qualities were absorbed and swallowed up in this perfection. * * * The bond of love engirdles the universe ; it is the oneness of Creator and created ; so that, as Christ said to his disciples, “ Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” * * * * How can we ever do with our hands, or speak with our lips, or conceive in our hearts anything that is dishonoring or defiant or unpleasing to that Being of perfect love ?

[Horace Mann.]
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“Child, amidst the flowers at play,
While the red light fades away ;
Mother, with thine earnest eye,
Ever following silently ;
Father, by the breeze of eve
Called the harvest work to leave ;
Pray ! ere yet the dark hours be ;
Lift the eye and bend the knee.”

Ah, brother ! thou hast a soul like mine. Out of thine eyes thou lookest, and sights and sounds and odors visit thy soul as mine, with wonder and tender comforting. Thou too lovest the faces of thy neighbors. Thou art oppressed with thy sorrows, uplifted with thy joys. Perhaps thou knowest not, so well as I, that a region of gladness surrounds all thy grief, of light all thy darkness, of peace all thy tumult. Oh, my brother ! I will love thee. I cannot come very near thee ; I will love thee the more. It may be thou dost not love thy neighbor ; it may be thou thinkest only how to get from him, how to gain by him. How lonely, then, must thou be ! how shut up in thy poverty-stricken room, with the bare walls of thy selfishness, and the hard couch of thy unsatisfaction ! I will love thee the more. Thou shalt not be alone with thyself. Thou art not I ; thou art another life, a second self, therefore I can, may, and will love thee.—[McDonald.]

If any one shall say unto thee that thou knowest nothing, and notwithstanding, thou must not be vexed ; then know thou that thou hast begun thy work.—[Epictetus.]

Go where we may, we seem mysteriously to carry our circumference of darkness with us ; for who can quit his own centre, or escape the point of view, or of blindness, which belongs to his own identity ? He who is not with God already, can by no path of space find the least approach ; in vain would you lend him the wing of angel or the speed of light ; in vain plant him here or there, on this side of death or that ; he is in the outer darkness still, having that inner blindness which would leave him in pitchy night, though, like the angel of the Apocalypse, he were standing in the sun. But ceasing all vain travels, and remaining with his foot upon this weary earth, let him subside into the depths of his own wonder and love ; let the touch of sorrow, or the tears of conscience, or the toils of duty open the hidden places of his affections, and the distance, infinite before, wholly disappears.—Oh ! if there be nothing celestial without us, it is only because all is earthly within ; if no divine colors upon our lot, it is because the holy light is faded out the soul ; if our Father seems distant, it is because we have taken our portion of goods, and travelled into a far country to set up *for ourselves*, that we may foolishly *enjoy* rather than reverently *serve*.—[Martineau.]

O Lord, take my heart, for I cannot give it ; and when thou hast it, oh, keep it, for I cannot keep it for thee ; and save me in spite of myself, for Jesus Christ's sake.

[Fenelon.]

“Without faith there is no excellence in the world ; faith in something wiser, happier, diviner than we see on earth.”

“ I WILL GIVE YOU REST.”

In the midst of life and its bustle,—tired and spent with toil ; sad with the infinite sadness which comes from thought ; weary of our own errors and weaknesses ; with the longing upon us to rise to something nobler and higher than we have known, we stand at last before the door of eternal life. God holds the key, and we seek to enter into the sweetness of his pardon ; the upholding of his strength ; the purification of his blessing ; the eternal happiness of his love. We come as little children do, seeking the door of our home. We are too small to reach up and knock loudly and strongly upon the door. We can only stand and cry, “ Father ! Father ! ” with trustful hearts that he will let us in. How quickly the plaintive, feeble cry is answered ! How soon swing back the great doors which seemed to make a barrier between us and our Lord ! His smile revives us into new vigor and cheerfulness. We wait for no welcome. Himself is welcome. We stand for no invitation. He is invitation. We are not afraid of the wondrous beauty and splendor of his mansion. He has made it for us, his little children. And when we are gathered in his arms, out of the cold and darkness, the sin and pain of the world, we know that there are no more doors to be opened ; that there is no more waiting ; that whatever may come to our bodies or sweep over our souls, we shall always be sheltered and cared for ; always have one dear place open to us in the boundless expanse of his being, from which we shall never be barred ; outside of which we can never stand ; in which no doors are builded, and which is ours now and forever,—even the loving heart of our Father in heaven.—[Golden Rule.]

FROM THE ARABIC.

God, who kindlest aspiration,
 Kindlest hope the heart within,
 God, who promisest thy mercy,
 Wiping out the debt of sin,—

Keep my mind from every impulse
 Which from thee may turn aside,
 Keep my heart from every passion
 By thy will unsatisfied.

God preserve me from a spirit
 Which thy favor cannot claim,
 From a knee that bendeth never
 In the worship of thy name.

When the night of evil threatens,
 Throw thy shelter over me,
 Let my spirit feel thy presence,
 And my days be full of thee.

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for thou art my hope: O thou my God, save thy servant who trusteth in thee. Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart. For thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. Oh turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give strength unto thy servant.

[Psalms.]

HOW TO ORDER LIFE.

Every gift of God is good, and given for our happiness ; and we sin if we abuse it. To use our fancy to our own misery is to abuse it, and to sin,—the realm of the possible was given to man to hope, and not to fear in. If (in sorrow) the thought strikes us that we are punished for our sins,—mourn for them, and not for the happiness they have prevented. Rather thank God that he has stopped us in time, and remember his promises of restoration if we profit by his chastisements. * * * Every step in love to God and devotion to him is a *duty*. Study God from his works. Do not study matter for its own sake, but as the countenance of God. Try to extract every line of beauty, every association, every moral reflection, every inexpressible feeling from it. Study leaves, flowers, their forms, colors, not to classify but to admire and adore God. Study the sky, water, trees ! the sounds and scents of nature. No sight but has some beauty and harmony. Study the human figure,—the language of attitude. Draw ! paint ! It will keep you from morbid thinking of yourself. It will increase your perception of beauty, and thereby your own harmony of soul and love to God. Study everything ! Let your mind freely forth ; only turn it inwards at prayer time, to recollect sins you were conscious of at the time, not to look for fresh ones. Do not allow sin-hunting ! It is no sign of holiness. Look forward to the future with hope. Be happy. Weep, but let them be tears of thankfulness. Study what a little child can study, nature ; and do what a little child does, love ! When you are doing nothing at night, pray and praise.—[Charles Kingsley.]

Lo ! here hath been dawning
 Another blue day,—
 Think ! wilt thou let it
 Slip useless away ?

Out of eternity
 This new day is born,
 Into eternity
 This night 'twill return.

See it aforetime
 No eye ever did ;
 So soon it forever
 From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
 Another blue day,—
 Think ! wilt thou let it
 Slip useless away ?

[Thomas Carlyle.]

The greatest gift of our Heavenly Father is the power to love ; and of all gifts is it the most common. Other blessings come with partial distribution ; this alone is universal, and the humblest soul, in spite of the lack of opportunity, may so live that by sheer strength of love alone may create for itself a heaven full of the presence of him who is God, because he is the Almighty Love.

[Rev. A. D. Mayo.]

Seek God in those hours which have appeared to you so empty, and they will become full to you,—for he will himself sustain you in them.—[Fenelon.]

ASPIRATION.

“ Seek those things that are above.” Seek, above all, assured communion with God, real work for God, frequent rest in the felt presence of God, through and beyond all these, the final reward of the soul in God. Seek thus the supernatural. The risen life of Jesus was as a whole “ hidden with God.” And in this it is typical of the life of a Christian. Whether we will or no, the greater part of life is passed alone ; and oh ! how much depends on the upward guidance of solitary thought ! How piteous is the degradation and the waste of thought of which again and again we have been guilty when walking or sitting alone, or during the still hours of a sleepless night ! Why cannot we recall the stirring precept at the needful time, and “ seek those things that are above ” ? Why should thought grovel habitually amid the petty ambitions, self-assertions, personalities, passions, lusts, which form the moral mire through which our souls have so often to drag heavily their anxious way ? Why do we not insist at these times of providential opportunity that thought *shall* rise upwards, and to heaven ? Why not make an effort of strong purpose, that “ whatsoever things are true, honest, pure, lovely, of good report,” we will think of these things ? A passage of holy scripture committed to memory ; some sentence of a great author consecrated by the recognition of ages ; some lines of an ancient hymn, or, if you will, of a modern one,—these may give wings to thought. For your own sakes, for God’s sake, let thought rise. Bid it, force it to rise. Think of the face of Jesus, of the home in heaven, of those revered and loved ones who have gone before, and who beckon us towards them from their place

of rest in paradise. Think of all that has ever cheered, strengthened, quickened, braced yourselves. This aspiration of the soul mounting towards its source and its deliverer ; this speechless language of faith, and hope, and love, bounding upwards towards the Everlasting Throne, and then prostrating themselves before it ; these are the spirit, the essence of prayer, latent beneath the stately movement of ancient liturgies, living ever in the secret hearts of all the devoted children of the church. Such prayer in its divinely imparted strength and confidence, is the very breath, the inmost movement of the supernatural life. It is the voice of love seeking its heavenly object.—[Liddon.]

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH.

The Lord is in his holy place
In all things near and far,
Shekinah of the snowflake, he,
And glory of the star,
And secret of the April-land
That stirs the field to flowers,
Whose little tabernacles rise
To hold him through the hours.

He hides himself within the love
Of those that we love best ;
The smiles and tones that make our homes
Are shrines by him possessed ;
He tents within the lonely heart,
And shepherds every thought ;
We find him not by seeking long,
We lose him not unsought.

[W. C. Gannett.]

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“ABIDE WITH US, FOR IT IS TOWARDS EVENING.”

The tender light is fading, where
 We pause and linger still,
 And through the dim and saddened air
 We feel the evening chill.

Long hast thou journeyed with us, Lord,
 Ere we thy face did know :
 Oh, still thy fellowship afford,
 While dark the shadows grow.

For passed is many a beauteous field,
 Beside our morning road ;
 And many a fount to us is sealed,
 That once so freshly flowed.

The splendor of the noontide lies
 On other paths than ours ;
 The dews that lave yon fragrant skies
 Will not revive our flowers.

It is not now as in the glow
 Of life's impassioned heat,
 When to the heart there seemed to flow
 All that of earth was sweet.

Something has faded, something died,
 Without us and within ;
 We more than ever need a guide,
 Blinded and weak with sin.

The weight is heavy that we bear ;
 Our strength more feeble grows :
 Weary with toil and pain and care,
 We long for sweet repose.

Stay with us, gracious Saviour, stay,
While friends and hopes depart ;
Fainting, on thee we wish to lay
The burden of our heart.

Abide with us, dear Lord, remain
Our life, our truth, our way :
So shall our loss be turned to gain,—
Night dawn to endless day.

[Rev. H. N. Powers.]

Why should you carry troubles and sorrows unhealed ?
There is no bodily wound for which some herb doth not
grow, and heavenly plants are more medicinal. Bind up
your hearts in them, and they shall give you not only heal-
ing, but leave you with the perfume of the blessed gardens
where they grow. Thus it may be that sorrows shall turn
to riches ; for heart troubles, in God's husbandry, are not
wounds, but the putting in of the spade before the planting
of seeds.—[Beecher.]

Though lonely be thy lot, fear not, for He
Who marks the sparrow's fall is guarding thee ;
And not a star shines o'er thy head by night,
But He hath known that it will reach thy sight.

And not a grief can darken or surprise,
Swell in thy heart or dim with tears thine eyes,
But it is sent in mercy and in love,
To bid thy helplessness seek strength above.

[Anonymous.]

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PRAYER OF FAITH.

The most effectual faith in God is not that which takes the form of the intellectual proposition that He is a mighty personal being, ruling the universe from some invisible throne at its centre, but it is faith in the goodness, the truth, the right, the love which He is. Then the soul connects by natural channels of communication with the very springs of divine life, and draws therefrom inexhaustible supplies. A soul thus conditioned is always in the attitude of prayer,—always receiving, always giving. It is the prayer, not of formal petition, but of spiritual aspiration; the prayer that in its fulfilment means the union of the heart's deepest desires with deeds of duty and disinterested affection; the prayer that becomes a passionate devotion to noble services in daily life. Nor need we fear lest human life would lose something of its graciousness and spirituality if the old prayer of personal petition were to cease. The prayer of aspiration may shape itself to all life's shifting spiritual moods,—to all climates and weathers of the soul,—to whatsoever stress of storm or serenity of clear skies,—to moods of penitence, of self-consecration, of heroism, and sorrow, and hope. Of such prayer, springing in unadorned sincerity from the heart, whether it take form in words or in unuttered meditation, the old scripture is still true, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Nor shall we ask whether it is the power of man or the power of God that does it; for when man acts in his own best strength he acts also in the strength of God and becomes a sharer of his omnipotence.—[Rev. W. J. Potter.]

LITTLE WHILE.

“ Oh for the peace that floweth as a river,
 Making life’s desert places bloom and smile !
Oh for that faith to grasp the glad forever,
 Amid the shadows of earth’s Little While !

“ A little while to wear the veil of sadness,
 To toil with weary steps through miry ways ;
Then to pour forth the fragrant oil of gladness,
 And clasp the girdle round the robe of praise.

“ And He who is himself the gift and giver,
 The future glory and the present smile,
With the bright promise of the glad forever,
 Will light the shadows of earth’s Little While.”

SELF-CONSECRATION AND PRAISE.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

We are *doomed* (oh, blessed doom!) to be conquered at last, and brought in remorse and shame, and yet with the infinite peace of restoration, to our Father's arms. We are *destined* to be noble, not base; pure, not unholy; loving, not selfish or malicious. Sooner or later, throughout the cycles of our immortality, all the vile sensuality, the yet more hideous hate and malice which we sometimes hug to our hearts, must fall off like loathsome, outworn rags, and be trampled under our feet with disgust and shame. We never sink our souls in gross and unholy pleasures now, but we are befouling them with mire which hereafter we shall wash away with rivers of tears. We never utter a cruel or slanderous word, or hurt a child or a brute, but we are making a wound in our hearts which will smart long, long after our victim has forgotten its pain. Nay, we never miss an opportunity of giving innocent pleasure, or of helping another soul on the path to God, but we are taking away from ourselves forever what might have been a happy memory, and leaving in its place a remorse.—[Frances Power Cobbe.]

“ For what shall I praise thee, my God and my King ?
For what blessings the tribute of gratitude bring ?
Shall I praise thee for pleasure, for health and for ease,
For the spring of delight and the sunshine of peace ?
Shall I praise thee for flowers that bloomed on my breast,
For joys in prospective and pleasures possessed,
For the spirits that brightened my days of delight,
And the slumber that sate on my pillow at night ?
For this should I thank thee ; and only for this,
I should leave half untold thy donation of bliss :
I thank thee for sorrow, for sickness and care,
For the thorns I have gathered, the anguish I bear,
For nights of anxiety, watching, and tears,
A present of pain, a perspective of fears.
I praise thee, I bless thee, my King and my God,
For the good and the evil thy hand has bestowed !
The flowers were sweet, but their fragrance is flown ;
They left me no fruit, they are withered and gone ;
The thorn it was poignant, but precious to me,
As the message of mercy that led me to thee.”

I count not myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

According to what a man *is*, is the quality and amount of the virtue that goes out of him, and he cannot cease to impart his peculiar life unless he sinks into the lethargy of death.—[Sears.]

PRESIDENT EDWARDS'S DEDICATION OF HIMSELF TO GOD.

I have been before God, and have given myself, all that I am and have, to God, so that I am not in any respect my own. I have given myself clear away, and have not retained anything as my own. I have been to God this morning, and told him that I gave myself wholly to him. I have given every power to him, so that, for the future, I will challenge no right in myself in any respect ; I have expressly promised him, and do now promise Almighty God, that by his grace I will not. I have this morning told him that I did take him for my whole portion and felicity, looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were ; and his law for the constant rule of my obedience, and would fight with all my might against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life.—And did believe in Jesus Christ, and receive him as a Prince and a Saviour, and would adhere to the faith and obedience of the gospel, how hazardous and difficult soever the profession and practice of it may be. That I did receive the Blessed Spirit as my teacher, sanctifier, and only comforter ; and cherish all his motions to enlighten, purify, confirm, comfort and assist me. This I have done. And I pray God to look upon it as a self-dedication, and to receive me as entirely his own, and deal with me in all respects as such, whether he afflicts me or prospers me, or whatever he pleases to do with me who am his.

Now henceforth I am not to act in any respect as my own. I shall act as my own, if I am angry because of injuries ; if I revenge ; if I do anything purely to please myself, or if I avoid anything for the sake of my ease ; if I omit anything because it is a great self-denial ; if I trust

to myself; if I take any of the praise of any good that I do, or rather which God does by me; or if I am in any way proud.

If we are to be immortal, it is our actual selves that are to live for ever; and we are often tempted to make of ourselves such beings as we would not wish, but should utterly loathe to be with for ever. * * * If we are to live after death, it cannot be, as here, under cover. Here we are known by bodily form and feature; beneath the veil of the flesh much of our actual character is hidden. When the body falls away, character must be what form and features are now. In the destruction of what was outward, that which was within must become outward, manifest, open to all beholders; and if there be that within us which for very shame we would not reveal on earth, we may well tremble lest it cannot be hidden in the spiritual realm towards which our rapid steps are tending; lest it there be known and read of all, without our ability to conceal it; lest it place us in just that attitude before and among our fellow-spirits which we would not for worlds hold with our fellow-men here.—[A. Peabody.]

Spener, in a low tone, spoke of the real life that knows no death, and which man must beget in himself. He said that for himself, though an old man, he wished neither to die nor to live, because one could already, even here, be with God so soon as one only had God within him, * * and that a man must not so much prepare himself for eternity as plant in himself the eternity which is still, pure, light, deep, and everything.—[Richter.]

O send me not away ! for I would drink,
Even I, the weakest, at the fount of life ;
Chide not my steps that venture near the brink,
Weary and fainting from the deadly strife.

Went I not forth undaunted and alone,
Strong in the majesty of human might ?
Lo ! I return all wounded and forlorn,
My dream of glory lost in shades of night.

Was I not girded for the battle-field ?
Bore I not helm of pride and glittering sword ?
Behold the fragments of my broken shield,
And lend to me thy heavenly armor, Lord !

[Anonymous.]

In the trembling of age and the stealthy approaches of the last sleep, the dear presence of an Almighty Guardian, to whom age is as childhood, and who creates the future with the past, fills the desponding shadows with a mild and holy light. Let him only be near, and the obscuring veil of mortal ill that sometimes seems to shut us in and tempt us to believe in nothing but the sun and rain, is soon withdrawn, like the cloud lifting itself from out the glen, and the sun first glorifies and then dissipates the haze, leaving the mountain range of immovable goodness and beauty clear against the everlasting sky. So pass the storms away ! So deepens the heavenly view to the soul that will but "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him."—[Martineau.]

"If we are always true to God, he will be true to us."

The Christian believes that after the event of death he shall be transferred to a sphere of spiritual being, and be surrounded by the denizens of another world. But what if we were already in it! What if already we are environed by its “numberless and rapid travellers”! This veil of flesh that hangs about us is designed not more to reveal God to us, than to temper and soften to us his intenser brightness; to hide the stupendous agencies by which he sways us, and to muffle the noise of their footsteps, because our ears could not bear the too solemn sounds, nor our eyes gaze on the too beautiful sight! * * The spiritual world is not a realm far off in space, into which we shall be introduced by the event of death. Rather is it that order of being of which we are to have cognizance by the powers that already wait within us; and death will not so much remove *us* as remove *from* us the obstructions that closed us in from its unseen illuminations.—[E. H. Sears.]

All that is in the heavens and the earth praiseth God, and he is the mighty, the wise. He will bestow on you the light to walk in. Hast thou not seen how all in the heavens and in the earth uttereth the praise of God,—the very birds, as they spread their wings? Every creature knoweth its prayer and its praise. He will guide to himself him who turneth to him, those who believe and whose hearts rest securely on the thought of God. What! shall not men’s hearts repose in the thought of God? They who believe and do the things that be right, blessedness awaiteth them.—[Koran.]

“ My heart is fixed, O God, my strength,—
My heart is strong to bear;
I will be joyful in thy love
And peaceful in thy care.
Oh, let my soul abound in hope,
And praise thee more and more.”

We should not found our praises of God on things that are far apart in their occurrence. We should look for his “wonderful works” in those that are most constant. The rejoicing that is in the Eternal Father should be no more suspended than are his bounties. We should think more of our continual preservation than of a fortunate escape,—more of the merciful laws of our being than of its transient incidents,—more of the great truth that a parental providence reigns than of any fact that may seem to illustrate its singular interferences. Life is full of opportunities,—nature is full of loveliness and splendor,—religion is sown thick with benignant signs for us. The spirit of the contemplative man should be filled with the love of the Being who fills all in all. The succession of our years should be one Thanksgiving day.—[N. L. Frothingham.]

The love of God is not a dream. It does not rise only in the solitary musing breast. It is cultivated and exercised, by the mind intent on good, in the hours of business and even in the seasons of relaxation. It is a principle which will grow with us, and be as large as our life. It will shape our actions; it will elevate our employments; it will make us retain our freshness; it will give us an everlasting youth.—[Simmons.]

SELF-CONSECRATION.

I beseech thee, O thou God of love, to engage my whole life in thy service. Bind me to thee by the sweet attractions of thy love, and grant that nothing on earth may alienate my heart from thee. Make me so thoroughly thine that I may cleave to thee forever,—in the hours of woe and the days of gladness, in weakness and strength, in health and sickness, in my labors and recreation, in my domestic affairs and social intercourses. Wherever I may be, in whatever work engaged, may I serve none but thee, may I follow none but thee. As thou hast taught me to worship no created object, to serve no idol, cast out from my heart that spiritual idolatry which draws away my love and energies from thee, and devotes them to the pursuit of some favorite passion,—that idolatry which makes the soul bow down before avarice, fame, ambition, or the felicities of the world. Keep me from all sorts of idolatry, and teach me to acknowledge thee as my only master, the one true God. May I always remember that the sole aim of my life is to find thee, and may all my thoughts and words and actions turn to thy glory. May my whole life be pervaded by thy holy spirit; may thy love be the centre of all my actions. If there is aught in a corner of my heart which I love for its own sake, and which I cannot sacrifice for thee, help me to root it out. Divert my affection from the world, and establish it firmly in thee, that it may hanker after nothing but thy pleasantest company. Gracious Lord, enable me, I beseech thee, so thoroughly to devote myself to thee, that I may live and die amid the sweet joys of true resignation.—[Chunder Sen.]

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good ;
Almighty, thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair : thyself how wondrous then !
Unspeakable, who sit'st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond, and power divine.
Speak ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels ; for ye behold him, and with songs
And choral symphonies, day without night
Circle his throne rejoicing : ye in heaven
On earth join, all ye creatures, to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Join voices, all ye living souls ; ye birds
That singing up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise ;
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
Witness, if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail, universal Lord ! be bounteous still
To give us only good ; and if the night
Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.

[Milton.]

He in whom the Godlike character dwells has all the universe for his own. "All things," said the apostle, "are yours ; whether life or death, or things present or things to come."—[Robertson.]

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.

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PRAYER.

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

[Tennyson.]

In our sorrow and sadness we look up to thee, O Lord, and when mortal friends fail us, and the urn that held our treasured joys is broken into fragments, we rejoice to know that thou understandest our lot, and wilt make every sorrow of our life turn out for our endless welfare, and our continual growth, so that thou wilt take us home to thyself with no stain of weeping on our face. O Lord, when ourselves have been false, when our own hearts cry out against us, and we stain our daily sacrifice with remorseful tears, we rejoice to know that thou art greater than our heart, and wilt bring home every wandering child of thine, with no stain of sin on our immortal soul. Father, we thank thee that amid the joys of the flesh, amid the delights of our daily work, and all the sweet and silent blessedness of mortal friendship and love upon the earth, thou givest us the joy of knowing thee, the still and calm delight of lying low in thy hand, and feeling the breath of thy spirit upon us. Amen.—[Parker.]

Our lives are to grow at one with the divine life. Oneness is the test and gauge of the true life in us ; but it is not to be reached by any abjectness of spirit. It is not a will broken, crushed ; an empty shell ; self, dry, dead, gone, that God wants, or man should offer. That is the offering of a serf to a despot ; the acceptance by a despot of the offering of a serf. God holds no such relations to man. He is dealing with sons. He says, " Give me thy heart." That is the acceptable offering. And the idea of an offering is, not that it shall be a wilted, imperfect thing, but a thing perfect, in flush life. God does not want anything crushed. My will subdued to God's will, not by imperative subjection, but by intelligent acquiescence, by a surrender that makes me more and more Christlike, elevates me to something positive in the universe of spirit, which angel and archangel shall recognize as of kin with them, and tunes my being so that it shall take its harmonious part in the full symphonies of heaven. The true Christian cry, the cry of the Christly heart is : Oh to be something ! that better, that glorified self which is the real outcome of the best life with Christ, the grand consummation, conclusion and crown. To be nothing ! it is crouching under the foot of a tyrant. To be something ! it is standing with clear eye, and kindling look, and throbbing heart, in the very divine presence, in the consciousness of the tie that makes one a son.—[J. F. W. Ware.]

To be healthy and complete, we must live alternately, now with our fellows and the world, and now with ourselves and the universe.—[Alger.]

Abide with me, fast falls the even-tide ;
The darkness deepens, Lord with me abide ;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless ! oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day ;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away ;
Change and decay on all around I see ;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness ;
I triumph still, if thou abide with me ;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

[Lyte.]

The aim which God assigns to us as our highest, is indeed the direct reverse of that which we propose to ourselves. He would have us in perpetual conflict ; we crave an unbroken peace. He keeps us ever on the march ; we pace the green sod by the way with many a sigh for rest. He throws us on a rugged universe. His resolve is, to demand from us, without ceasing, a living power, a force fresh from the spirit he has given ! He leaves in each man's lot a thicket of sharp temptations, and expects him, though with bleeding feet, to pass firmly through, having given him courage, conscience, and a guide divine, to sustain him lest he faint.—[Martineau.]

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law.

THE DIGNITY OF PRAYER.

Consider the dignity of this, to be admitted into so near converse with the highest Majesty. Were there nothing to follow, no answer at all, prayer pays itself in the excellence of its nature, and the sweetness that the soul finds in it. Poor fallen man, to be admitted into heaven while he is on earth, and there to come and speak his mind freely to the Lord of heaven and earth as his friend, as his father!—to empty all his complaints into his bosom, to refresh his soul in his God, wearied with the follies and miseries of the world. Where there is anything of his love, this is a privilege of the highest sweetness, for they that love find much delight to discourse together, and count all hours short, and think the day runs too fast that is so spent. And they that are much in this exercise, the Lord doth impart his secrets much to them.—[Leighton.]

O God! so glorious in thy power, and at the same time so tender in thy love, so high above the heavens, and yet adapting thyself to the needs of thine earthly children; so infinite, yet dwelling within our hearts in closest union; so just, and yet so easily entreated by those who love thee,—I give myself thankfully into thy hand, turn me whichever way thou wilt. I am all thine, do with me as may seem good in thine eyes. Show me what thou wilt have me to do. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are thy ways higher than our ways. We are impatient, for our life is but for a moment. Thou art from everlasting, therefore is thy patience full of long-suffering. O Lord, I adore thee! Thou hast made me for thyself, and I am forever thine.—[Fenelon.]

There is in heaven a light, whose goodly shine
Makes the Creator visible to all
Created, that in seeing him, alone
Have peace ; and in its circuit spreads so far
That the circumference, with enlarging zone,
Doth girdle in the worlds.

[Cary's Dante.]

We are placed here in a state of imperfection and trial, and much that seems like mystery and mischance. But what shall the future be, if the light of God's goodness is to shine through its ages? I answer, it shall be all bright disclosure, full consummation, blessed recompense. We shall doubtless *see* what we can now only believe. The cloud will be lifted up, and will unveil—eternity! and what an eternity! All brightness ; all beatitude ; one unclouded vision ; one immeasurable progress ! The gate of mystery shall be past, and the full light shall shine forever. Blessed change ! That which caused us trial shall yield us triumph. That which was the deeper darkness shall be but the brighter light. That which made the heart ache shall fill it with gladness. Tears shall be wiped away, and beamings of joy shall come in their place. He who tried the soul that he loved shall more abundantly comfort the soul that he approves. That God who has walked in a mysterious way, with clouds and darkness around about him, will then appear as the great Revealer ; and he will reveal what the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor the heart conceived.—[Dewey.]

“ When the love of God truly fills the heart, it is full of peace,—it is satisfied.”

We are our own compensation. From the outside we never gain it. We are our own reward and our own punishment. What is there in this world or the next, outside of itself and its own powers, which can bring to the soul either the compensation for its evil or good conduct, its labors performed or its work done? We are too thoroughly individual and sovereign in our natures to receive from without the equivalent for our deeds. * * * Compensation, then, is what we *are*, not what we have. We can take nothing with us but what we *are*. Surely the Christ must have comprehended this most fully when he said, "Lay up for yourselves in heaven." * * * The soul that is true cannot lose or miss its compensations, no matter through what trials it may pass or however stony a way its weary feet must go. To be true is to be compensated. We may make our lives to bloom for us, if we please. The cheerful, brave acceptance of our lot, the noble endeavor to adapt ourselves quietly to our circumstances, the preservation of good humor, the fostering of charity and generosity; these will make roses and violets to grow in our hearts, if they do not grow for our hands; and for every gentle word we say, for every smile we bestow or benevolent act we perform, the angel within us shall record: "Rejoice, true soul; thou hast gained unto thyself another, lasting reward.—[The Golden Rule.]

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Art thou weary? dost thou languish?
Art thou sore distressed?
“ Come to me,” saith one, and coming
Be at rest.

If I find him, if I follow,
What his guerdon here?
Many a sorrow, many a labor,
Many a tear.

If I still hold closely to him,
What hath he at last?
Sorrow vanquished, labor ended,
Jordan passed.

If I ask him to receive me,
Will he say me nay?
Not till earth and not till heaven
Pass away.

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,
Is he sure to bless?
Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs
Answer, Yes.

[Anonymous.]

“ To enjoy this life, it is necessary to possess a temper candid to the faults and mistakes of others, disposed to mutual accommodation, not easily provoked, and willing to see everything that occurs in the most favorable light. The utmost meekness under injuries, and the most unbounded forgiveness, are represented in the Sermon on the Mount as the only dispositions that lead to happiness.”

PRAYER FROM PARKER.

O thou Spirit whom no name can measure and no thought contain ; thou to whom years are as nothing, and who art from everlasting to everlasting ! I thank thee that my life still lasts from year to year. I thank thee that my cup is full of blessings. But I would bless thee still if thou didst fill my cup with grief and turn my day into night. Yea, O God, my Father ! I will bless thee for whatever thou shalt send. I know it is all very good. I bless thee that thou art still very nigh me ; that thou speakest to my heart from year to year. Thou kindlest my faith, thou quickenest my love, thou castest down my fear. O my God ! be not afar off ; may I never become false to thy gift ! Let my eyes be open, my heart true and warm, my faith pure and heavenly. May religion dwell in the inmost sanctuary of my heart ; let it be my daily life ! and wherever the years shall find me, may I do my duty without fear, and so live on, lying low in thy hands, and blessed by thy goodness.

There yet must remain for the souls which God has made and purified, both work to do for him and joy in him and in one another. There must be the service of his creatures, the learning of his truth, the reconciliation with every foe, the reunion of immortal affection, and the everlasting approach, nearer and nearer, through the infinite ages, to perfect goodness, and to Him who is supremely good. But these things lie afar off, where eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the things which God hath prepared for those who love him, ay, and for those also who now love him not.

[F. P. Cobbe.]

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PRAYER OF A LONELY HEART.

I am alone ! Oh be thou near to me,
 Great God ! from whom the meanest are not far.
 Not in presumption of the daring spirit
 Soaring to find the secrets of itself
 Make I my earnest prayer ;—in the deep want
 Of utter loneliness, my God, I seek thee,
 If the worm may creep up to thy fellowship,
 Or dust instinct with yearning rise toward thee.

I have no fellow, Father, of my kind,
 None that be kindred, none companions to me,
 And the vast love and harmony and brotherhood
 Of the dumb creatures thou hast made below me
 Vexes my soul with its own bitter lot.
 Around me grow the trees, each by the other,—
 Innumerable leaves, each like the other,
 Spring forth and live and fade and fall together ;
 Beside me bloom the flowers,—each rosy cup
 Hath sisters leaning their fair cheeks against it ;
 The birds fly all above me, not alone,
 But coupled in free fellowship, or gathering
 A joyous brood, sweeping in companies
 The mild blue fields between the clouds. The clouds
 Troop in society, each on the other
 Shedding like sympathy, reflected light ;
 The waves, a multitude, together run
 To the deep breast of the receiving sea.
 Nothing but hath its kind, its company,
 O God ! save me alone ! Then let me come,
 Good Father, to thy feet ; when even as now
 Tears that no human hand is near to wipe

O'erbrim my eyes, O wipe them thou, my Father !
When in my heart the stores of its affections
Piled up, unused, locked fast, are like to burst
The fleshy casket that may not contain them,
Let me come nigh to thee ! accept them thou
Dear Father ! Fount of love ! compassionate God !
When in my spirit burns the light, the fire,
That have made men utter the words of angels,
And none are near to bid me speak or live,
Hearken, O Father ! Maker of my spirit !
God of my soul ! to thee I will outpour
The hymns resounding through my troubled mind,
The sighs and sorrows of my lonely heart,
The tears and weeping of my weary eyes.
Be thou my kindred, gracious, glorious God !
And fit me for a fellowship with thee.

[Frances Anne Kemble.]

Eternal life, as Jesus unfolds it, is not chiefly a thing of time and space. It is immediate and universal. Death is abolished, and spirits on earth are put essentially in one sphere with spirits in heaven. God is not distant, and his true children are not set waiting for his appearance, but have him now as father and friend. * * * Eternal life is a life of eternal principles, and where man lives, not from his outward, but his inward senses, from reason, conscience, and immortal affections, he has immortality. Death does not then bound his horizon, affect his plans, baffle his aspirations. The real triumphs of the gospel have been the triumphs of the soul over the senses, of what is immortal over what is mortal.—[Dr. Bellows.]

Our Father, thou dost talk with us from heaven now, no less than with thy servants of old. Thou dost teach us in providence and in the stupendous order of nature. * * Deep-piercing are thy warnings and thy threatenings to-day, as if they flashed visibly from mountain or cloud into our natural eye. Thy righteous laws promising reward, thy no less righteous laws menacing punishment, are wrought into our very frames,—so that we have an ever-open book before us, calling us to thee by the most powerful of persuasions and entreaties. * * * And in addition to all these appeals in favor of the right, to all these protests against the wrong, revealed to us in the very constitution of our being, we have the precepts, the life of Jesus Christ, himself the glorious pattern of what we ought to be.

Our Father, look upon us as thy children. We have needs. Thou who in thy good providence dost give us our daily bread, give us that for which our souls are languishing and perishing, the bread and the waters of life; and oh! save us from that second death that consists in alienation from thee and voluntary disobedience to thy high will. Thou dost give us pleasures of sense,—oh, give us those purer and nobler satisfactions of the soul, by which we shall be able to exclaim, like the psalmist of old, “My delight is in the law of the Lord.”—[Horace Mann.]

And thou shalt walk in soft white light with kings and priests abroad,

And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the hills of God.

[Thomas Aird.]
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For me,—fall my fortune as it may,
A comfort and a strength it is to know,
That wheresoe'er I go
There is the same heaven over me on high,
Whereon in faith to fix the steady eye ;
The same access for prayer ;
The same God, always present everywhere ;
And if no home, yet everywhere the bed
Which earth makes ready for the weary head.

[Southey.]

When I had so felt the real weight of sin and helplessness of myself, then followed a complete renunciation of (my) self into God's hands. It seemed for a time as if self was swallowed up. * * * All the rubbish of earthly-mindedness seemed swept away, and I lay, as it were, quite passive for the actings of God's spirit. Thoughts of God were the first to spring up in the morning ; my heart waited not for my head to teach it how to pray, but was lifted up unconsciously and without effort in words of prayer and praise. The looking to Jesus as my Saviour seemed now to be lost in the adoration of God himself ; and the operation of his spirit on my soul—sometimes felt almost sensibly—in an indescribable communion with him, who is *in us all!* became more exclusively the object of my thoughts. In prayer I felt most strongly that God was in me, and that I no longer had to search for him out of self, his temple was in my heart,—there was then no temptation to try me, I lived in an atmosphere of spiritual thoughts, as in a peaceful heaven on earth !—[Mrs. Maria Hare.]

RELIGIOUS SILENCE.

Religion, when deepest and most vital, will have little impulse or need to "tell its experience." Its experiences—all that are meant for the public—are as manifest as ripened fruit which hangs to your sight and reach on the tree that has borne it. The secret springs of these experiences,—the softening dews and rains, the penetrating sunshine of divine love,—the times when the heart has swelled with some great pure thought, and desire has kindled with some flame of generous or holy aspiration, and the eyes have filled with the consecrating tears of baptism as a vision of noble duty and sacrifice appeared before them,—will any one venture to tell of these? to tell of this secret coming of the Infinite Power, when you have almost heard, as it were, the rustling of the sacred garments in the silence, and felt almost the touch of a mysterious presence enveloping you? You may venture it with your nearest and best trusted friend, alone, when the day and its distractions are gone, and you can sit down together in the secluding twilight, where heart can touch heart to help out the words. But *in public*, the words to describe such experience will not come. And even with your friend there are spiritual deeps you will not sound by the plummet of any words. Speech will break down, and silence, often more expressive than speech, will come to indicate depths of experience which you cannot relate. The profoundest deeps of all you can disclose only to Him who knoweth all. As the lover can tell the innermost secret of his heart only to the beloved, so the deeply religious soul has experiences which it can whisper to no one but Him who is so near that he has no need of outward organ either

to hear or to speak. In the silence before Him they are revealed. But no words can tell them to any finite ear.

[W. J. Potter.]

TO THE SUPREME BEING.

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray ;
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed ;
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where Thou say'st it may.
Unless Thou show to us thine own true way,
No man can find it : Father, thou must lead.
Do thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind,
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread ;
The fetters of my tongue do thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

[Wordsworth.]

The spirit world is not far off. The good man, with every new Christian grace, is brought into holier affinities with the societies of the blest. The bands of angels come near and close around him, and when death uncovers his sight it simply shows him where he is.—[Sears.]

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts; praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light; praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps: fire and hail: snow and vapor: stormy wind fulfilling his word: mountains and all hills: fruitful trees and all cedars: beasts and all cattle: creeping things and flying fowl.

Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

Love, lift me upon thy golden wings
From this base world into thy heaven's hight,
Where I may see those admirable things
Which there thou workest by thy souvrain might,
Farre above feeble reach of earthly sight,
That I thereof a heavenly hymn may sing
Unto the God of love, high heaven's King.

[Spenser.]

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HYMN BEFORE SUNRISE IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

Hast thou a charm to stay the morning star
 In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
 On thy bold, awful head, O sovran Blanc!
 The Arve, Arveiron, at thy base
 Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful form!
 Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines
 How silently! Around thee and above
 Deep is the air, and dark, substantial, black,
 An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it
 As with a wedge! But when I look again
 It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
 Thy habitation from eternity!
 O dread and silent mount! I gazed upon thee
 Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
 Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer,
 I worshipped the invisible alone.

Yet like some sweet beguiling melody,
 So sweet we know not we are listening to it,
 Thou the meanwhile wert blending with my thought,
 Yea, with my life, and life's own secret joy,
 Till the dilating soul, enrapt, transfused
 Into the mighty vision passing there,
 As in her natural form, swelled vast to heaven!
 Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
 Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
 Mute thanks, and secret ecstasy! Awake,
 Sweet voice of song! Awake, my heart! awake,
 Green vales and icy cliffs! all join my hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovran of the vale!
 Oh, struggling with the darkness all the night,

And visited all night by troops of stars,
 Or when they climb the sky or when they sink,—
 Companion of the morning star, at dawn
 Thyself earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
 Co-herald,—wake, oh, wake, and utter praise !
 Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in earth ?
 Who filled thy countenance with rosy light ?
 Who made thee parent of perpetual streams ?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad !
 Who called you forth from night and utter death ?
 From dark and icy caverns, called you forth
 Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
 Forever shattered, and the same forever ?
 Who gave you your invulnerable life,
 Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
 Unceasing thunder and eternal foam ?
 And who commanded, (and the silence came,)
 Here let thy billows stiffen and have rest ?

Ye ice falls ! ye that from the mountain's brow
 Adown enormous ravines slope amain,—
 Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
 And stopped at once amidst their maddest plunge !
 Motionless torrents ! silent cataracts !
 Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
 Beneath the keen, full moon ? Who bade the sun
 Clothe you with rainbows ? Who with living flowers
 Of loveliest hue, spread garlands at your feet ?
 God ! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
 Answer ! and let the ice plains echo, God !
 God ! sing, ye meadow streams, with gladsome voice !
 Ye pine groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds !

And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God !
Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost !
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest !
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain storm !
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds !
Ye signs and wonders of the elements,
Utter forth, God, and fill the hills with praise !

Thou too, hoar mount ! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet, the avalanche unheard
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene,
Into the depth of clouds that veil thy breast,—
Thou too, again, stupendous mountain ! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling, with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest like a vapory cloud
To rise before me,—rise, oh, ever rise !—
Rise like a cloud of incense from the earth !
Thou kingly spirit, throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth with her thousand voices, praises God.

[Samuel T. Coleridge.]

God asks no man whether he will accept life. That is not the choice. You *must* take it. The only choice is, *how*.—[Beecher.]

A PUBLIC PRAYER OF DR. BELLOWES.

Almighty One ! the infinitely holy ! Thou that inhabitest the praises of eternity, yet desirèst the love and trust of thy children on the earth ! Not for thine own sake, O Father, but for ours, dost thou invite us to come into thy presence, that we may draw into our hearts the light and heat of thine own benignant being, and have thy moral and spiritual intelligence, feel the beating of thine own infinite love in our souls, and be quickened with the keenness of that moral life of which our consciences are the shadow and the proof. Descend then, O Father, in the plenitude of thy power, and light thy children through the darkness of their way ; pour the gracious fullness of thy spirit into their shrunken veins ! We bring our empty vessels, that thou mayst fill them with the water of life ; we bring our souls stained with the sins and follies of the world to the fountain, that thou mayst wash us clean, and make our flesh again to be as the flesh of a little child. We come with all the hardness that the harness of worldly care has wrought in our spiritual bodies, beseeching thee to make them again tender to thy touch, and to shape them to thy will !

O Father ! bless the world in which we live, and turn its gifts and opportunities to the uses for which thou didst ordain them. Let not the very multitude of thy blessings make us ungrateful ! Suffer us not to build up out of thy bounty a wall between our hearts and our Heavenly Benefactor, and lose the health of thy countenance in the glory of these outward bestowments ; for thou art greater than all thy gifts, and to know and love thee is above all riches ! We thank thee for the beauty and glory of the earth ; for

the comforts and joys of our domestic life ; for the strain and responsibility of our daily vocations ; for all the experience and teaching the world in which we live is fitted to supply ; for the companionship of our race ; for the memories of the past, for the examples of the just, and the words of wisdom spoken by thy more gifted children in all the ages. We bless thee that thou hast never left thyself without witness, in that believing souls have risen up in the darkest times, and that a line of holy prophets and apostles illumines the path of humanity. Especially do we rejoice in the love and light that was in Jesus Christ, that triumphed over the great darkness of his own day, and has made so much of the brightness of ours. We thank thee that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and able to give to our grief and humiliations the sympathy and encouragement they need. Glory be to the God and Father of him who was made perfect through suffering, and has taught us that earthly prosperity and comfort are not the measure and test of thy divine favor ! In our trials and adversities let this faith never desert us, that there is no irreparable evil but unrepented sin, and no calamity that compares with ignorance of goodness and duty.

We bring our sorrows and cares to thee whose providence lays them upon us for our good always, beseeching Thee to turn them into medicines for our spiritual leanness, that though they be grievous for the present, they may work out for us an exceeding weight of glory.

And what we ask for ourselves, we ask with equal earnestness for all men our brethren ! We seek no partial benefits, and claim no mercies that we do not desire to see universally extended. We rejoice to believe thee the

Father of all thy children, and humbly accept our place in the common lot, praying that the sorrows and wants of our fellow-creatures may be felt as our own, and that we may hold our blessings as thy stewards for their benefit, and not for ourselves only. We commit ourselves to thee for life and death, believing that thine appointments are wise and thy purposes towards us kind and good. In what remains of life, may we live to thine honor and glory by doing good unto others as we have opportunity, and by growing in grace and truth after the example of thy dear Son. And thine shall be the praise, now and forevermore, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WORK.

What are we set on earth for? Say to toil—
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines,
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And Death's wild curfew shall from work assoil.
God did anoint thee with his odorous oil,
To wrestle, not to reign; and he assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labor, to their heart and hand,
From thy heart and thy hand, and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dew drops with another near.

[Mrs. E. B. Browning.]

Let us remember that, until we make that consecration, that act of faith, all life will be a trial; there will be no perennial happiness distilled for us; we cannot know inwardly the love of God because we will not graft our life upon it.—[King.]

Come to me, thoughts of heaven !
My fainting spirit bear
On your bright wings, by morning given,
Up to celestial air.

Come in my tempted hour,
Sweet thoughts, and yet again
O'er sinful wish and memory, shower
Your soft effacing rain.

Waft me where gales divine
With dark clouds ne'er have striven ;
Where living founts forever shine,
O blessed thoughts of heaven.

[Mrs. Hemans.]

Religion, in one sense, is a life of self-denial: but self-denial does not belong to religion as characteristic of it; it belongs to human life. The lower nature must always be denied when we are trying to rise to a higher sphere. Is it more self-denying to be a Christian than it is to be an artist, or to be an honest man, or to be a man at all? Of all joyful experiences, there are none like those which spring from true religion.—[Beecher.]

MISCELLANY.

MISCELLANY.

ALONE WITH GOD.

“Alone with God ! day’s craven cares
Have crowded onward unawares ;
The soul is left to breathe her prayers.

“Alone with God ! I bare my breast :
Come in ; come in, O holy guest ;
Give rest,—thy rest, of rest the best.

“Alone with God ! how still a calm
Steals o’er me, sweet as music’s balm
When seraphs sing a seraph’s psalm !

“Alone with God ! no human eye
Is here with eager look to pry
Into the meaning of each sigh.

“Alone with God ! no jealous glare
Now stings me with its torturing stare ;
No human malice says—beware !

“Alone with God ! from earth’s rude crowd,
With jostling steps and laughter loud,
My better soul I need not shroud.

“Alone with God ! he only knows
If sorrow’s ocean overflows
The silent spring from whence it rose.

“ Alone with God ! he mercy lends ;
 Life’s fainting hope, life’s meagre ends,
 Life’s dwarfing pain he comprehends.

“ Alone with God ! he feeleth well
 The soul’s spent life that will o’erswell,
 The lifelong wants no words may tell !

“ Alone with God ! still nearer bend ;
 O tender Father, condescend
 In this my need to be my friend.

“ Alone with God ! with suppliant mien
 Upon thy pitying breast I lean,
 Nor less because thou art unseen.

“ Alone with God ! safe in thine arms,
 Oh, shield me from life’s wild alarms,
 Oh, save me from life’s fearful harms !

“ Alone with God ! my Father, bless
 With thy celestial promises
 The soul that needs thy tenderness.

“ Alone with God ! oh, sweet to me
 The covert to whose shade I flee
 To breathe repose in thee,—in Thee.”

What madness to be afraid of belonging too fully to God ! It is fearing to be too happy ; it is fearing to love his will in all things ; it is fearing to become too courageous in bearing the crosses that must be allotted to us ; to have too much of the consolation of God’s love, too much freedom from the miseries of human passions.—[Fenelon.]

NEARNESS TO THE FATHER.

God is very near every human soul. He has the power, and it is his pleasure to aid us in this way. I do not say that he is equally near all men. The wicked, of their own accord, may go away from his presence, and the ignorant and feeble minded may have only a dim or superstitious idea of his influence. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," says Jesus. When a soul lives a sincere and holy life, its sense of the presence of God amounts to inspiration. Men often forget that God is near them; but there are many ways by which they are reminded of the fact. The most usual mode is by the presence of suffering or danger, when men feel as if the eye of omnipotence were looking down out of the heavens upon them. Souls of a nobler order and in a higher state are otherwise reminded. A truly great and good man is constantly reminded of his Father's presence. He sees God not with his bodily eyes, but with the eyes of his soul. He lives with God and acts by his direction.

The first of the conditions upon which depends our nearness to the Deity is *sincerity*. We must have a hearty love for the truth in every person and subject and in every place. We must love the truth because it is of God, and listen to its counsel as if God spoke directly to us. In dealing with other minds, we should only care to find out their truth and increase it by gifts of our own; not to abuse them by making them ashamed of what they have. And we must not trifle with ourselves: this is our great danger,—not that we cheat others, but that we cheat our own souls out of their best possessions. There is an

“ election ” impending in the heart of each human being, upon which his happiness and welfare depend.

There is another condition of nearness to the Father, viz., that we live up to the light he has given us. The man who lives constantly *below* his conscience, and tries to apologize to it or evade its demands, may now and then see heaven as in a vision or a dream ; but only he who faces duty, and says he *will* be a true disciple of Jesus, *is* in heaven.—[A. D. Mayo.]

Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song ; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles : 'tis nought to me,
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full ;
And where he vital breathes, there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey ; there with new powers
Will rising wonders sing. I cannot go
Where universal love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns,
From seeming evil still educating good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression !—But I lose
Myself in Him, in light ineffable !
Come, then, expressive silence, muse His praise.

[Thomson.]

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“Lord, I have laid my heart upon thy altar,
 But cannot get the wood to burn ;
 It hardly flares ere it begins to falter,
 And to the dark return.

“Old sap or night-fallen dew has damped the fuel ;
 In vain my breath would flame provoke :
 Yet see, at every poor attempt’s renewal,
 To thee ascends the smoke !

“Tis all I have—smoke, failure, foiled endeavor,
 Coldness and doubt and palsied lack ;
 Such as I have I send thee, Perfect Giver !
 Send thou thy lightning back.”

Sin estranges the soul from God ; and when estranged from God, the moral power which should conquer sin is palsied. Then conscience itself increases the evil, by leading us to believe that we have no *right* to come to God ; that we are not worthy to speak to him or feel towards him the confidence and affection of a child. The light of nature cannot help us ; the intuitions of the soul cannot help us ; moral culture does not help us ; yet it is evident that only by being brought *into union* with God can any new life or spiritual power be obtained. God himself, therefore, must come to us, for we are morally unable to go to him. *This he does in the gospel*,—the essential meaning of which is, that God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself. * * * The work of God in forgiveness, therefore, *is a positive, real communication of himself through Christ to the human soul*.

[J. F. Clarke.]

The true test of character is where what is borne or done must remain unknown, where the struggle must be begun and ended, and the fidelity be maintained, in the solitary heart. * * * The great trials of the affections, which from their very nature are individual, make a solitude around us. The conscience, which cannot throw its burden off, is essentially personal. Remorse and penitence and all the better aspirations of the soul are personal. The mount of prayer, the Gethsemane of agony, were solitary. One need not go to the desert nor to the cell; the profoundest spiritual experiences will create a solitude of their own. It seems to me that in this we may see the most blessed of purposes; the thoughts and feelings that we shrink from uttering to man are already known to God. We long to utter them, we long for sympathy and help; we find it by looking above. And thus it is that all which is most sacred in regret or hope or moral purpose carries the thoughts upward, and that which separates us from man unites us to God.

[Rev. Ephraim Peabody.]

“Love is indefatigable, it is never weary. It is inexhaustible,—it lives and springs up of itself, and the more it is diffused the more it abounds. He who loves not his brother is not worthy of Christ, who died for his brethren. Have you given wealth? give yet your life, and love will return a wealth of happiness to your own bosom. I tell you in truth, the heart of him who loves is a paradise on the earth. He has God in him,—for God is love. Love reposes at the bottom of pure souls like a drop of dew in the cup of a flower.”

LUTHER'S PRAYER.

Our God, our Father, with us stay,
And make us keep thy narrow way ;
Free us from sin and all its power ;
Give us a peaceful dying hour ;
Deliver us from worldly arts,
And let us build our hopes on thee,
Down in our very heart of hearts !
O God, may we true servants be,
And serve thee ever perfectly ;
Help us, with all thy children here,
To fight and flee with holy fear ;
Flee from temptation, and to fight
With thine own weapons for the right :
Amen, amen, so let it be !
So shall we ever sing to thee,
Hallelujah !

GOD WITH US.

“ The heart of John Wesley was, in his last hours, filled with love and praise. Not being able to hold a pen, and being asked what he wished to say, he replied, ‘ Nothing but that God is with us.’ Often breaking out into singing himself, he said repeatedly to those about him, ‘ Pray, praise ! ’ And again he emphatically reiterated, ‘ *The best of all is, God is with us !* ’ ”

“ Every upward step must make another needful ; and so we must go on until we reach heaven, the summit of the aspirations of time.”

A PRAYER OF FENELON.

O my God and Father ! I desire to love thee, and fear lest I should not love thee as I ought. I ask of thee an abundant and pure love. Thou seest this desire, for thou hast implanted it in me ; regard, then, the want which thou beholdest in thy creature. O God, whose love to me is sufficient to inspire a boundless affection in return, look not upon the torrent of iniquity in which I was almost swallowed up, but rather on thy mercy. * * * Lord, thou art the God of nature ; all things obey thy word. Thou art the soul of all being. Thine are all things, and shall not my heart be thine, that heart which thou hast formed and dost keep in life ? It is thine, and no longer mine.—Thou art my all, my eternal portion. Do with me as thou wilt. Amen.

Prayer is not a mere outpouring of what we feel,—of giving expression to what might be expressed in some other way—in worthy act, for instance,—but prayer is also a means by which more *life* may be put into the human soul—not the putting forth of a strong spirit ;—it is conscious deficiency asking for a strong spirit,—it is not the way the soul has of expending its religious fervor, it is a way the soul has of *obtaining* religious force. Prayer, then, embraces adoration, praise, loving desires ; but it includes as its central essence this idea of a consciousness of intercourse with God, of receiving *from* him. It fulfills the natural conditions upon which it receives, and thus opens the soul, so that it *can* receive light, strength, life.

[Rev. F. A. Knapp.]

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THANKFULNESS.

“I thank thee, O my God, who made
 The earth so light,
 So full of splendor and of joy,
 Beautiful and bright ;
 So many glorious things are here
 Noble and right !

“I thank thee, too, that thou hast made
 Joy to abound,
 So many gentle thoughts and deeds
 Circling us round,
 That in the darkest spot on earth
 Some love is found.

“I thank thee, Lord, that all our joy
 Is touched with pain ;
 That shadows fall on brightest hours,
 That thorns remain ;
 So that earth’s bliss may be our guide
 And not our *chain*.

“For thou, who knowest, Lord, how soon
 Our weak heart clings,
 Hast given us joys, tender and true,
 Yet all with wings,—
 So that we see gleaming on high
 Diviner things.

“I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast kept
 The best in store ;
 We have enough, yet not too much
 To long for more,
 A yearning for a higher place
 Not known before.”

The conception of the unity of the Godhead did not prevent the Egyptians from thinking of God as very near to them. He is their Father, and they "sons beloved of their Father." He is the "Giver of life; Toucher of the hearts; Searcher of the inward parts, is his name.. Every one glorifies thy goodness; mild is thy love towards us; thy tenderness surrounds our hearts; great is thy love in all the souls of men." One lamentation cries, "Let not thy face be turned away from us; the joy of our hearts is to contemplate thee; chase all anguish from our hearts." "He wipes tears from off all faces. Hail to thee, Lord of all truth; whose shrine is hidden. Lord of the gods; who listenest to the poor in his distress; gentle of heart when we cry to thee. Deliverer of the timid man from the violent; judging the poor, the poor and the oppressed. Lord of mercy, most loving; at whose coming men live, at whose goodness gods and men rejoice. Sovereign of life, health and strength! The heart of man is no secret to him that made it. He is present with thee though thou be alone."—[Egyptian "Records of the Past," 2800 B. C.]

"Our home is where we dwell, not where we stay. It is where we plant our loves, make our life interests. The mind makes the world, the heart makes the home. God's house is just what we ourselves make it. The narrow, bigoted soul, proud of its own faith, lives in a small and mean space. To such the Father's house can never be a home. In that house, builded in eternity and infinitude, is the mansion of thought, of truth. You are where your thoughts are, and the truer those thoughts are the nobler your world will be."

MORNING.

“Lord, in thy light, oh let me walk this day !
By thy love prompted, act and speak and pray
As a new creature it becomes to do,
Whose aim it is, in all her words and ways,
To set forth duly her Creator’s praise,
And new in heart, in life also be new.

“I pray not, ‘Take my troubles all away’ :
It is for love to bear them that I pray,
And firm belief that all is for my good,
That every trouble must be kindly meant,
Since from the hands of him it has been sent,
Who is my loving Father and my God.”

He who is forgiven *must be satisfied* with his outward lot, whatever it may be. The forgiveness which unites the soul to God, and which fills it with the love of God, is enough. He will gladly take his place in the great order of the universe, whatever that place may be. He will be glad to do his Master’s work in a lowly place, a lowly office, if it is right that he should be there.

[Clarke.]

“No farmer drops seed into the earth which is surer to answer his prayer for a harvest, than we are sure to reap whatsoever we sow. Heart prayers, lip prayers, work prayers, life prayers, they compel response, and we all get what we long for, ask for, labor for, live for, if we long, ask, labor, live enough. *Enough, remember: always pray, never faint.*”

PRAYER.

God of the morning and of the evening, we thank thee for the returning hours of rest, for the stillness of night, for the darkness that has fallen around us, the shadow of thy wings separating us from the world and leaving us alone with thee. We would come to exalt our thoughts, to cleanse our affections by communion with thee. Penetrate and enlarge our minds with a sense of thy greatness. Come down and enter into our inmost souls. Let every shadow of evil vanish before the brightness of thy presence! Open our eyes, merciful Father, that we may see the wide difference there is between what we are and what we ought to be. Startle us out of our spiritual slumbers. Take us, Heavenly Father, and mould us to thy will. Give us strength to overcome every unholy passion. We commend ourselves to thine unalterable love this night. Whether we live or die we are thine, and we are under thy providence evermore. Amen.—[Furness.]

For all our penny-wisdom, for all our soul-destroying slavery to habit, it is not to be doubted that all men have sublime thoughts; that all men value the few real hours of life; they love to be heard, they love to be caught up into the vision of principles. We mark with light in the memory the few interviews we have had in the dreary year of routine and of sin, with souls that made our souls wiser; that spoke what we thought; that told us what we knew; that gave us leave to be what we only were.—[Emerson.]

IN THE FIELD.

“ Fighting the battle of life !
 With a weary heart and head,
 For in the midst of the strife
 The banners of joy are fled.

“ Fighting all day long—
 With a very tired hand ;
 With only my armor strong,
 The shelter in which I stand.

“ There is nothing left of me ;
 If all *my* strength were shown,
 So small the amount would be,
 Its presence would scarcely be known.

“ Fighting alone to-night—
 With not even a stander-by
 To cheer me on in the fight
 Or to hear me when I cry !

“ Only the Lord can hear,
 Only the Lord can see
 The struggle within, how dark and drear,
 Though quiet the outside be !

“ Lord, I would fain be still
 And quiet behind my shield ;
 But make me to love thy will,
 For fear I should ever yield.

“ Nothing but perfect trust,
 And love of thy perfect will,
 Can raise me out of the dust
 And bid my fears be still.

“Lord, fix my eyes upon Thee,
And fill my heart with thy love ;
And keep my soul till the shadows flee
And the light breaks forth above ! ”

The sense of Divine displeasure, which is an inevitable consequence of every act of wilful sin, is its heaviest penalty. By a law of the conscience, as fixed as the law of gravitation, every wilful transgression produces in the transgressor’s mind a sense of Divine displeasure. Just so far as our conscience is awake and active, we feel on such occasions that God, because of his holiness, must regard us with disapprobation. This feeling produces estrangement on our part. This leads us to cast off fear, and restrain prayer ; to cease from filial, affectionate communion with our Heavenly Father. * * * * * There is a forgiveness taught in the New Testament, and confirmed by Christian experience, which removes everything which separates us from the Divine love, whether the obstacle be on our part or on the part of the Deity. * * * Pardon is the expression of love on the side of the parent ; the reception of love on the side of the child. The sense of pardon creates a power of grateful affection in the heart, which enables it to retrace its steps, rebuild its character, form new habits of virtue, and forgetting the ignoble past, reach forward to a better future.

[J. F. Clarke.]

Thou art my portion, O Lord : I have resolved that I will keep thy words.

“‘*Himself hath done it.*’ Can it then be aught
 Than full of wisdom, full of tenderest love?
 Not one unneeded sorrow will he send
 To teach this wandering heart no more to rove.

“‘*Himself hath done it!*’ He who has searched me
 through
 Sees how I cleave to earth’s ensnaring ties :
 And so he breaks each reed on which my soul
 Too much for happiness and joy relies.

“‘*Himself hath done it!*’ He would have me see
 What broken cisterns human friends must prove,
 That I may turn and quench my burning thirst
 At his own fount of *ever-living love.*”

Says Francis of Sales, “ The measure of the love of God is to love without measure ! ” Francis of Assissi says, “ Knowing myself to be nothing, and wishing to be so, God becomes mine with all his infinite riches, and I have no need either to deprecate or desire anything more.” Fenelon exclaims, “ Oh ! if men did but know what the love of God is, they would not wish any other felicity.” And Bernard of Clairvaux cries, “ All other joy is but sorrow.” These wonderful utterances of the saints may seem delirium and folly ; but that *they* had this experience cannot be doubted ; and who shall dare to call it a deception ? No ; everything else may be false, but this is true. Based on immediate intuitions of consciousness, fortified by the evidence of the greatest and best of men, preeminently exemplified by Jesus, it must be accepted as a reality.—[Alger.]

The first condition of effectual prayer is that we do not speak into empty space, that the awe of the great Presence is upon us, that the mighty Shadow has circled us in, the Spirit brooding on our souls in a sense of One very nigh in whom love and holiness are perfect,—and that then we speak, if we speak at all, only as we are moved, only that which we should dare to speak if we stood before his face and saw the majesty of God. It is possible to *say* our prayers, using no untruthful words, and yet to *say* them only from ourselves and not to God, not to any Being who is livingly felt to be with us ; so that when they are over we only know that we have opened our own hearts, with no experience of having been spoken to, of having been touched by the Invisible, of having received quickenings from a Spirit other than ourselves. What extent of blessing God may grant to such prayers it is not ours to determine ; that they do not reach the supreme reality and beatitude of communion is obvious.—[Rev. M. Thom.]

Perfect love has power to soften
Cares, that might our peace destroy ;
Nay, does more,—transforms them, often
Changing sorrow into joy.

[Madame Guyon.]

“ O Lord God ! under the shadow of thy wings is our hope ; protect us and carry us when we are little, and even in hoar hairs wilt thou carry us.”

EVENING HYMN.

The night is come wherein at last we rest :
 God order this and all things for the best !
 Beneath his blessing fearless we may lie,
 Since he is nigh.

Drive evil thoughts and spirits far away ;
 O Father ! watch o'er us till dawning day ;
 Body and soul alike from harm defend,
 Thine angel send !

Let holy prayers and thoughts our latest be ;
 Let us awake with joy, still close to thee,
 In all serve thee, in every deed and thought
 Thy praise be sought !

Give to the sick, as thy beloved, sleep,
 And help the captive, comfort those who weep,
 Care for the widow's and the orphan's woe,
 Keep far our foe !

For we have none on whom for help to call
 Save thee, O God in heaven, who carest for all,
 And wilt forsake them never, day or night,
 Who love thee right.

[Bohemian Brethren.]

“ Teach me to love Thee ; teach me to be ever recollected in Thee, and to walk always in thy presence. Teach me to love my friends *in* Thee, and my enemies *for* Thee. Grant me to persevere to the end in this love, and so come to that happy place where I may love and enjoy Thee forever.”

O God ! let us not linger at the threshold of Christianity ; conduct us to its inmost depths of life. Help us to break through the doubts, despondencies, lethargy, weakness, which hinder us. Dispose us to see thy goodness everywhere. Make us sensible of our inward wants, indigence, weakness. Expose to us our hidden selves. Lead us to a dependence on thy perfect will, and may it reign supreme in us. Let not the knowledge of our sins fill us with dejection, but rather lead us to thy grace while rousing us to a firm and faithful conflict with every wrong desire.—[Channing.]

I know not whether we are yet wearied enough in the times of early manhood to realize our childhood and His Fatherhood : but when some years have passed, and brought with them the daily burden of life, it is a simple yet a wonderful comfort to have a second self which is a child ; to possess a childhood of feeling in the midst of manhood ; and when the work of the day is passed, to lay our folded hands upon the knees of God as once we did upon our mother's knee, and looking up to say, “Our Father, which art in Heaven.”—[Rev. S. A. Brooke.]

He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast ;
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small :
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

[Coleridge.]

PRAYER.

“To all Thy grace who seek,
Thou who art ever near;
Shed on my heart Thy heavenly dews,
To me most dear.

“The way is dark I go;
Thy light seems ta’en away:
O give me more of trust in Thee;
Help me to pray.

“‘Thy will, not mine, be done,’
And then I surely know
That strength divine will be vouchsafed
For every blow.

“To lie in Thy dear care,
Which doth all souls embrace—
Father, I leave myself with thee:
Grant me thy grace.”

“Resolved,” wrote President Edwards, at twenty years of age,—“Resolved very much to exercise myself in this all my life long, viz., with the greatest openness of which I am capable to declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him,—all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and every *thing* and every circumstance.”

With an habitual sense of the Divine presence, the trials of life are lightened.—[E. Peabody.]

Uphold me, O God, with thy free spirit ; strengthen me with might in the inner man ; that being emptied of all selfish solicitude I may no longer be the slave of restless and tormenting desires ; but with all holy indifference may consider all earthly good, of whatever kind, as continually passing away, and my own life as passing with it ; for there is nothing permanent under the sun.

[Thomas à Kempis.]

“ So poor we call our life, so little worth,
 Yet every day to every soul on earth,
 Lofty or lowly, prison-bound or free,
 Come all the loves of heaven with pleading grace,
 Comes truth, adored of God, and prays, ‘ Choose me ’ !
 And joy on shining wings cries, ‘ Follow me ’ !
 And sorrow, crowned with stars, says ‘ Learn of me,’
 And *Love* waits always with divinest face,
 Whose smile alone can make a heavenly place ;
 The all-beloved ! to suffer here or reign,
 With her is sweetest pleasure sweetest pain.
 O earth, what hero-stories ours should be !
 Dear earth, what grace abounds o’er sin in thee !
 Where is there yet a spot of common ground
 Unwet by martyr-blood or sacred tears ?
 When comes a day whose strife may not be crowned
 With the same glory as the eternal years ? ”

Why should I feel another man’s mistakes,
 More than his sicknesses or poverty ?
 In *love* I should ; but anger is not love,
 Nor wisdom neither.—[Herbert.]

RESIGNATION.

“Father divine ! to thee
 In this the holy, solemn autumn time,
 My soul anew would consecrated be,
 My aims, my hopes, my wishes all be thine.

“Let every storm be stayed,
 Each throb of selfish care forgotten be :
 My heart no more of earthly ills afraid,
 Resigns its all to thee.

“Calm dawn of peace ! . . .
 Oh bless my soul once more, a welcome guest ;
 Bid each rude chord of worldly passion cease,
 And sorrow bring no more its dark unrest.

“Thou before whom
 The purest angel veils his radiant face,
 To thee the High, the Holy one, I come,
 Pleading for strength, for mercy, and for grace.

“Thou who dost see
 The agony a human heart can bear,
 In loneliness I yield to thy decree,
 In loneliness beseech thy hand to spare.

“Weary of life, the wounded spirit faints,
 Yet bows in confidence beneath thy rod :
 The hour will come when, freed from earth's restraints,
 My soul shall know thee nearer, O my God.

“A little way—
 Still reaches onward in this human strife :
 Press on, my soul, for an eternal day
 Shall consummate the close of mortal life.

“ Imperfect though my prayer,
My heart its future state resigns to thee ;
If but thy favor I may seek to share,
My lot whilst here can never hopeless be.

“ Faint not, nor weary be—
All sorrow ceases when the goal is won ;
I would with joy be what thou makest me ;
Father, in earth or heaven, thy will be done ! ”

The character of each one of us, and the fortunes of the world, are intrusted to our higher natures ; this is our way out of moral chaos and darkness ; and life is what it is, simply because a man is unfaithful to his great trust. As it rests with man, through a wise and diligent employment of his intellectual faculties, to subdue the earth for earthly uses, and make it an altogether safe, comfortable and desirable dwelling-place, so it is laid as a sacred obligation upon his spiritual and moral nature to change the kingdoms of this world into a kingdom of heaven, in which righteousness, peace and holy joy prevail. Because of our sin our world is what it is. The mystery which men make of the world’s moral condition comes back upon us as the mystery of our own unfaithfulness.—[Ellis.]

Of all teachings, that which presents a far distant God is the nearest to absurdity. Either there is none, or he is nearer to every one of us than our nearest consciousness of self.—[McDonald.]

WRITTEN BY HENRI PERREQUE WHEN DETAINED BY SICKNESS FROM PUBLIC WORSHIP.

“Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwells. I have loved this beauty from a child. I have loved thy holy ceremonies, the austere harmony of the psalms, the pomp of festivals, the flowers about the altar. * * * I loved the retired place where I hid myself with my prayer; I liked to lose myself in the oblivion of my own existence and the clear view of Thee only; I liked to remain alone after all were gone, when the brilliance of tapers was extinguished, with the last echoes of the great organ.”

Then comes the answer. Like the author of the “*Imitation*,” he imagines the voice of Christ replying: “Symbols will pass away, my son; temples of stone will pass away; my sacraments themselves will become needless, along with faith and hope; but that which will endure forever is worship in spirit and in truth, perfect charity, and the rest of souls in me. Regret not immoderately that which in the external temple would please thy senses and imagination. Remember that in the whole world there is neither temple nor tabernacle so dear to me as the soul of the just man.”—[*Hamerton’s Modern Frenchman.*]

Faith and trust, and the pledging of ourselves to the Infinite will and love, are qualities that cannot be created in us by the Almighty as natural forms of our inward constitution; they are results of the spiritual powers set in opposition to hardship, perplexity, sorrow, and the sight of things seeming to drift wrong.—[*King.*]

My God, my Father, while I stray
 Far from my home, in life's rough way,
 Oh, teach me from my heart to say,
 "Thy will be done."

What though in lonely grief I sigh
 For friends beloved no longer nigh?
 Submissive still I would reply,
 "Thy will be done."

If thou shouldst call me to resign
 What most I prize, it ne'er was mine:
 I only yield thee what was thine:
 Thy will be done.

Should pining sickness waste away
 My life in premature decay,
 My Father, still I strive to say,
 "Thy will be done."

If but my fainting heart be blest
 With thy sweet spirit for its guest,
 My God! to thee I leave the rest:
 Thy will be done.

Renew my will from day to day,
 Blend it with thine, and take away
 All that now makes it hard to say,
 "Thy will be done."

Then, when on earth I breathe no more
 The prayer half mixed with tears before,—
 I'll sing upon a happier shore,
 "Thy will be done."

[Charlotte Elliot.]
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MEDITATION.

I call myself a sinner, and I call my world a sinful world, because I know and feel that I have not done my best, by that grace of God which is my divine nature, to make myself and my world what through this nature God has revealed to me as his holy will concerning myself and my world. I call that sin which God has made known to me by conscience as what ought not to be or to be done, and which would not have been, or been done, had I put myself, my better and truer self, on the side of conscience and of God. No matter about my lower nature which knows and can know only its own law; no matter about the mysterious Providence according to which righteousness has so much right and so little power; no matter about our inheritance of moral evil; no matter about temperament and circumstances. I know and feel that I have not made the best of the situation; that more or less in the sight of God and man I am to be blamed; I blame myself. I cannot avail myself of the universality of the experience to say that it is only my infirmity, only a disease, only a misfortune, to be regretted and not to be ashamed of. No; I will acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me.

There is such a reality as sin in our world; under whatsoever temptation I cannot argue it out of my experience. It is the thought of my wisest hours, not of my most foolish; of my best hours, and not of my worst. I am more alive to it, not when I forget what I have done and what I am, but when I remember and ponder what I have done and am. Especially is this true when the story of Jesus is fresh upon my mind, and the image of the perfect God

very clear before the eyes of the soul, and the light within
burning bright. * * * It will do us no harm, and,
please God, may do the world some good, if each of us
shall ask, "What have I been doing, and how have I
been amusing myself, in such a world as this?"

[Rufus Ellis.]

Haste not ! let no thoughtless deed
Mar for aye the spirit's speed :
Ponder well and know the right,
Onward then with all your might !
Haste not ! years can ne'er atone
For one reckless action done.

Rest not ! life is sweeping by,
Go and dare before you die,
Something mighty and sublime
Leave behind to conquer time !
Glorious 'tis to live for aye,
When these forms have passed away.

Haste not ! rest not ! calmly wait,
Meekly bear the storms of fate !
Duty be thy polar guide,—
Do the right, whate'er betide !
Haste not ! rest not ! conflicts past,
God shall crown thy work at last.

[From the German of Goethe, 1768.]

The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth
more and more to the perfect day.

PRAYER.

O Lord God ! thou art our refuge and our hope ; on thee alone we rest ; for we find all to be weak and insufficient but thee. Many friends cannot profit, nor strong helpers assist, nor prudent counsellors advise, nor the books of the learned afford comfort, nor any precious substance deliver, nor any place give shelter, unless thou thyself dost assist, strengthen, console, instruct and guard us. To thee, therefore, do we lift up our eyes ; in thee, our God, the Father of mercies, do we put our trust. Bless and sanctify our souls, protect and keep us amid all dangers, and accompanying us by thy grace, direct, as along the way of peace, to thine everlasting home. Amen.

[Martineau.]

Create a clean heart in me, O God ! and renew a right spirit within me. Grant that I may now serve thee in good earnest.—Too late have I known thee, O eternal truth ! Too late have I loved thee, O eternal beauty ! Too long have I gone astray from thee ! From this moment, O my sovereign good ! I desire to be forever thine. Oh, let nothing in life or death ever separate me from thee any more ! * * * * Look to me, O Lord ! that I may serve thee obediently all my days.

[A Catholic Manual.]

On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Lord divine, forever dear,
Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, thou art near !

[Dr. O. W. Holmes.]

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AT NIGHT.

What ails my heart, that in my breast
 It thus unquiet lies,
 And that it now of needful rest
 Deprives my tired eyes?
 Let not vain hopes, griefs, doubts or fears
 Distemper so my mind;
 But cast on God thy thoughtful cares,
 And comfort thou shalt find.

Forgive Thou me, that when my mind
 Oppressed began to be,
 I sought elsewhere my peace to find
 Before I came to Thee.
 And, gracious God! vouchsafe to grant,
 Unworthy though I am,
 The needful rest which now I want,
 That I may praise thy name.

[George Wither, 1641.]

PRAYER.

O God, our everlasting hope, who holdest us in life, and orderest our lot; we ask not for any prosperity that would tempt us to forget thee. * * * Every work of our hand may we do as unto thee; in every trouble flee to thee, and let no blessing fall on thankless hearts. Strip us, O Lord, of every proud thought; fill us with patient tenderness for others; make us ready to help and quick to forgive, and then fix every grace, compose every fear, by a steady trust in thine eternal realities, behind the changes of time and the delusions of men. Thou art our rock; we rest on thee. Amen.—[Martineau.]

TRUE LIVING.

If a man would obtain a purified and sweetened experience of existence, and would broaden and intensify it into an exalted and incorruptible calmness of belief and pleasure, he must enlarge and hallow his love. He must sedulously cherish every means of improving his love, making the love that is already in him more and better. He must vanquish every vile impulse and rough passion; indulge no gusts of temper; cast out envy, vanity, pride, and hate, subduing them under the serene sway of an all-pervading and magnanimous charity. Let him cultivate the love he has, and at length it will dilate and soar into an experience he has not, but inexpressly desires. For the love of nature, beauty, truth,—the love of usefulness, heroism, disinterested goodness,—the love of men, when developed to a certain pitch,—pass into something before unknown, diviner than all, the love and blessedness of God. The divine life is a life free from the galling bonds and fretful exactions of self-will, free from discord and fear; a harmonized life of trustful power, joy, and peace, which the soul recognizes as a communication with the immanent Lord. The law of progress in it is a sovereign consecratedness to the culture of insight, energy, sensibility, and obedience, by persevering exercises of thought, prayer, holiness, and love.—[Alger.]

Humility is the source of all true greatness; pride is ever impatient, ready to be offended. He who thinks nothing is due to him, never thinks himself ill treated: true meekness is not mere temperament, for this is only softness or weakness.—[Fenelon.]

“TO GIVE IS TO LIVE.”

Forever the sun is pouring his gold
 On a hundred worlds that beg and borrow ;
 His warmth he squanders on summits cold,
 His wealth on the homes of want and sorrow.
 To withhold his largess of precious light
 Is to bury himself in eternal night ;
 To give
 Is to live.

The flower shines not for itself at all ;
 Its joy is the joy it freely diffuses ;
 Of beauty and balm it is prodigal,
 And it lives in the life it sweetly loses.
 No choice for the rose but glory or doom—
 To exhale or smother, to wither or bloom.
 To deny
 Is to die.

The seas lend silvery rain to the land,
 The land its sapphire streams to the ocean ;
 The heart sends blood to the brain of command,
 The brain to the heart its lightning motion ;
 And ever and ever we yield our breath,
 Till the mirror is dry, and images death.
 To live
 Is to give.

He is dead, whose hand is not open wide
 To help the need of a human brother ;
 He doubles the life of his life-long ride,
 Who gives his fortunate place to another ;

And a thousand million lives are his,
Who carries the world in his sympathies.

To deny
Is to die.

[Anonymous.]

I wonder we are not always tender and thoughtful of the old! I wonder why people forget so, and seem to think that the romance and the dream days all belong to the young, none seeming to have a thought for the stories written on hearts that are hidden by wrinkled, care-worn faces,—never seeming to think of the pathos of lives grown silent and tired with the long journey,—never thinking of the struggles, the noble deeds which are written everywhere—written in the old faces looking from dim eyes, sounding in voices from which the music has gone, in steps grown slow and halting, hands trembling and strengthless. Oh! I wonder we ever forget all this. I wonder we are not always tender of the old!—[Rose Porter.]

“Consider,” said Bunyan in his last sermon to his flock, “that the holy God is your Father; and let this oblige you to live like the children of God, that you may look your Father in the face another day.” And in his last hours he said, “Pray often, pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God. The spirit of prayer is more precious than gold and silver.” And again, “When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart, and remember, emphatically, either prayer will make thee cease from sin, or sin will certainly entice thee to cease from prayer.”

COME HOME!

Soul ! celestial in thy birth,
 Dwelling yet in lowest earth,
 Panting, yearning to be free,
 Hear God's spirit whisper thee.

Thus it saith in accents mild,—
 “ Weary wanderer, wayward child,
 From thy Father's earnest love
 Still forever wilt thou rove ?

“ Turn to hope, and peace, and light,
 Freed from sin, and earth, and night ;
 I have called, entreated thee,
 In my mercies gentle, free.

“ Human soul, in love divine
 I have sought to make thee mine ;
 Still for thee good angels yearn ;
 Human soul, return, return ! ”

[Briggs' Coll.]

Worldly pleasures have in them nothing of immortality, and when they cease,—earthly in themselves,—they are altogether earthly to think of. But the sweet delights which God gives, and which he takes away,—to look after *them*, we have to look on *high* ; and they draw up to them our hopes and faith.—[Mountford.]

Thou, O God, hast created us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in thee.—[St. Augustine.]

GERHARD TERSTEGEN.

“ Speak with none so gladly,” he used to say, “ as with thy God. Let us accustom ourselves the whole day long, and even while in business, to the Lord’s presence, and seek in simple faith to make ourselves known to him and to become intimate with him in our hearts ; but,” he added, “ we must have a frequent seclusion in order to this sweet and prayerful exercise of recollection and retiring to God in our hearts. A soul without prayer is like a solitary sheep without a shepherd. The tempter sees it and lures it away into his snare.” “ Think no ill of thy brother,” he would say ; “ judge not, be not hasty ; put the best construction upon everything. Love those who do not walk in all things as thou dost ; let every one go his own way ; what is that to thee ? Follow Jesus.” And again, “ It is alike to the Lord where we live, but not *how* we live. A royal palace is too narrow for him who lives to himself, and a little cottage is large and beautiful to him who lives to the Lord.” “ Seek to become,” he said one day to a friend, “ inwardly, a little innocent child, that finds fault with nothing and lets all the world act and speak of it, even in its presence, as they please, without once regarding it or letting itself be troubled by it.”

Remember you have not a sinew whose law of strength is not action ; you have not a faculty of body, mind or soul, whose law of improvement is not energy.

[E. B. Hall.]

“ The soul celebrates, at every good deed, a birthday.”

INCOMPLETENESS.

Nothing resting in its own completeness
 Can have worth or beauty ; but alone
 Because it leads and tends to farther sweetness,
 Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth
 Towards a truer, deeper life above ;
 Human love is sweetest when it leadeth
 To a more divine and perfect love.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness ;
 In that want their beauty lies ; they roll
 Towards some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
 Bearing thus onward man's reluctant soul.

[A. A. Proctor.]

Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah,
 Pilgrim through a weary land :
 I am weak, but thou art mighty ;
 Hold me with thy powerful hand :
 Bread of heaven,
 Feed me till I want no more.

Open, Lord, the crystal fountain,
 Whence the healing streams do flow ;
 Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
 Lead me all my journey through :
 Strong Deliverer,
 Be thou still my strength and shield.

[Oliver.]

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THE BEATITUDES IN COLORS.

Christ said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." That means the gentle, submissive ones, who bow before his will without a murmuring thought,—the contrite and broken spirits "with whom I will dwell," saith the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy. To them the blessing of heaven is promised, and *violet* I call their color, the hue that seeks not notice, but is one of the sweetest, most soothing of all the varied tints. And then comes, "Blessed are they that mourn." We link the *indigo* with the mourning, so dark, so dreary to the eye, if we look at it alone, but soft when blended with its sister blue; not dark, even if alone, when we can by faith read the "Shall be comforted." *Blue*, 'tis well that should be the symbol of the meek,—the symbol of those who delight themselves in peace! *Green* we will choose for the hungering and thirsting, because green is the all-bountiful color that clothes the trees, fields and plants; and so it seems the color that holds the promised blessing, "They shall be filled." And the merciful, they who "shall obtain mercy,"—*yellow*, the golden, it surely belongs to them, for theirs is a golden promise. *Orange* for the "peacemakers,"—that too is golden, but of a richer, deeper shade, just as their promised blessing is fuller; for what is like in blessing to be called "the children of God"? And *red*, it is for the "persecuted, the reviled,"—them to whom comes much of suffering, many wounds, but who have known the strength of "My presence shall go with you." The pure in heart, they who shall see God, we choose for them *white*, the spirit light, that mingles the colors all in *one* till color is lost and disappears before the

“Great Light,”—just as all the blessings seem to grow dim and become *one* in that greatest of all blessings, which is the heritage of the “pure in heart who shall see God.”

[From Summer Driftwood.]

DESIRERS FOR GOD'S PRESENCE.

Wilt Thou not visit me?
 The plant beside me feels thy gentle dew ;
 Each blade of grass I see,
 From thy deep earth its quickening moisture drew.

Wilt Thou not visit me?
 Thy morning calls on me with cheering tone ;
 And every hill and tree
 Lends but one voice, the voice of Thee alone.

Come ! for I need thy love,
 More than the flower the dew, or grass the rain ;
 Come, like thy holy dove,
 And let me in thy sight rejoice to live again.

Yes ! Thou wilt visit me ;
 Nor plant nor tree thine eye delights so well,
 As when, from sin set free,
 Man's spirit comes with thine in peace to dwell.

[Jones Very.]

Luther said : “God has written the gospel not only in the Bible, but in trees and flowers, stars and clouds.”

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.
Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

For, before the word is on my tongue, lo ! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy presence ?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there : if I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ; but the night shineth as the day : the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

I will praise thee ; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made : marvellous are thy works ; and that my soul knoweth right well.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them !

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand : when I awake, I am still with thee.

Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts :

And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.—[139th Psalm.]

Lord, many times I am a-weary quite
 Of my own self, my sin and vanity ;
 Yet be not thou (or I am lost outright)
 Weary of me.

And hate against myself I often bear,
 And enter with myself in fierce debate ;—
 Take thou my part against myself, nor share
 In that just hate.

Best friends might loathe us, if what things perverse
 We know of our own selves they also knew ;—
 Lord, holy one ! if thou, who knowest worse,
 Shouldst loathe us too !

[R. C. Trench.]

What shall I do to gain eternal life ?
 Discharge aright
 The simple dues with which each day is rife ?
 Yea,—with thy might.
 Ere perfect scheme of action thou devise
 Will life be fled :
 While he, who ever acts as conscience cries,
 Shall live, though dead.

[Schiller.]
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QUOTED FROM FREDERICK PERTHES.

“Love,” we find him writing, “is the sum total of life ; and it is only according to our measure of it that we are accessible to truth. Man has part in the eternal only so far as he cherishes in himself the Divine spirit-love. Pray and work, is the great maxim for young and old. In the conflict with spiritual foes, the best method I find to be an unvarying habit of devoting daily a certain portion of time to communion with God. Moments of glowing aspiration and occasional attempts to command religious emotions will not do. ‘Be ye holy as I am holy.’ These words often pierce me through marrow and bone. Not to shut our eyes, through indolence or despondency, to the sin remaining in us,—not to mistake death for life, sorrow for repentance, and imagination for love,—not to grow weary in our upward course, or to substitute wishing for willing ; this is our ceaseless task here below,—a task impossible without faith, but without which faith is impossible too.” “Hold simply and firmly,” he said in his last hours, “to that which our Lord has told us ; read again and again the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth chapters of John ; he who has these has all he needs, alike for life and for death.”

We live too much in the outward, in driving toil without spiritual renewal. We need to learn the wisdom of reenforcing the inner vitality by nourishing the roots of faith and principle. Our souls need *rest*, that in secret prayers divine communion shall nourish the inner life of the spirit.—[R. R. Shippen.]

HEAVENLY SUCCOR.

And is there care in heaven? and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is,—else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts; but oh! the exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,
And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels he sends to and fro
To serve to wicked men,—to serve his wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succor us, that succor want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love and nothing for reward:
Oh, why should heavenly God to men have such regard?

[Spenser.]

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